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WHAT IS PRESBYTERIAN LAW

AS DEFINED BY

THE CHURCH COURTS?

EIGHTH EDITION.

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

CONTAINING THE DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES TO 1898 INCLUSIVE.

BY THE

REV. J. ASPINWALL HODGE, D.D.

PHILADELPHIA:

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PREFACE.

THROUGHOUT my ministry of twenty-five years I have experienced the need of ready and authoritative answers to questions which constantly arise in Church work. As a young man, fresh from the seminary, I was embarrassed when suddenly made "the chief ruler," the Moderator of the Session. I was practically ignorant of its high duties, and was tempted to neglect them under the new and absorbing pressure of pulpit preparation. Questions of government and discipline were presented, and my opinions and the theories urged by others were useless. I needed to know how the Church had defined its constitution and applied its laws, and was thus led to record the interpretations and decisions of our highest judicatory. I soon found that Elders and Deacons, unexpectedly called to their responsible offices, gave their solemn assent to the constitution often after a very cursory reading, and were necessarily perplexed as to their duties. Candidates were frequently ordained when found "apt to teach," but unprepared "to rule" and "to take care of the Church of God." Communicants needed instruction as to the distinctive principles

of Presbyterianism, their own privileges and work in the Church and their relation to other denominations of Christians.

To meet these needs in my own congregation, I formed a class on Church Polity, and prepared questions on our "Form of Government" to help the members in their study. The interest excited and the good accomplished convinced me that all the officers and members of our churches would be greatly helped by authoritative answers to such questions. In this book I attempt to aid them, presenting, not my own views nor the theories of others, but PRESBYTERIAN LAW AS DEFINED BY THE CHURCH COURTS. Sound doctrine, the efficiency of officers, Christian activity and the maintenance of fellowship with other branches of Christ's Church, all depend very much upon a correct appreciation and proper use of our scriptural form of government; the principles of which have been developed and illustrated under both the Old and New Dispensations of the Church of God. Sabbath-school classes in Church Polity therefore would be a lasting spiritual edification to the whole Church; and more practical instruction in the theological seminaries and thorough examinations before Presbytery would secure a ministry better fitted to teach and to rule.

The real unity of the Church, as well as denominational courtesy, requires the recognition of the ministry, ordinances and discipline of other branches of the Christian

Church. Christ brings all his worshipers into frequent ecclesiastical and personal relations for mutual improvement, and in anticipation of the perfect communion to be enjoyed hereafter. I have therefore stated the principal peculiarities of other churches, as far as possible, in the words of their acknowledged standards.

I trust that this book may help to make us more loyal and efficient as Presbyterians, and more sympathetic with the whole body of Christ.

J. ASPINWALL HODGE.

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT,
January, 1882.

PREFACE TO THE EIGHTH EDITION.

In preparing this edition for the press the book has been carefully revised, many of the plates having been changed. It contains the decisions of the General Assembly to the present date, thus greatly increasing its value over previous editions. The Board of Publication has gone to considerable expense in carrying out the efforts of the author to make this book a real help to our Ministers and Elders. The references to the Presbyterian Digest are to the Edition published in 1898 by the Board.

J. ASPINWALL HODGE.

Lincoln University,
Chester Co., Pa., *January* 1, 1899.

CONTENTS.

[The chapters and sections correspond with those of the "Form of Government," and the text of these is indicated by italics.]

		Page
	Preface	3
	Preface to Seventh Edition	6
	Contents	7
	Introductory	9
Chap. I.	Preliminary Principles	21
II.	Of the Church	28
III.	Of the Officers of the Church	41
IV.	Of Bishops or Pastors	45
V.	Of Ruling Elders	52
VI.	Of Deacons	60
VII.	Of Ordinances in a Particular Church	71
	Prayer	74
	Praise	76
	Preaching	80
	Baptism	82
	Lord's Supper	90
	Fasting	93
	Sabbath	93
	Marriage	97
	Catechising	108
	Collections	111
	Discipline	113
	Benediction	117
VIII.	Of Church Government, and the Several Kinds of Judicatories	117
IX.	Of the Church Session	126
X.	Of the Presbytery	177

Chap.		Page
XI.	Of the Synod	241
XII.	Of the General Assembly	260
XIII.	Of Electing and Ordaining Elders and Deacons	305
XIV.	Of Licensing Candidates	323
XV.	Of the Election and Ordination of Ministers	358
XVI.	Of Translation, or Removing a Minister	392
XVII.	Of Resigning a Pastoral Charge	401
XVIII.	Of Missions (Boards and Committees)	411
	Board of Home Missions	415
	Board of Education	430
	Board of Publication	442
	Board of Foreign Missions	459
	Board of Church Erection	473
	Board of Relief	480
	Board of Missions for Freedmen	486
	Sustentation Fund	499
	Board of Aid for Colleges and Academies	506
	Permanent Committee on Temperance	509
	Committee on Manses	512
	Permanent Committee on Systematic Beneficence	515
	Presbyterian Historical Society	521
XIX.	Of Moderators	525
	General Rules for Judicatories	530
	Standing Orders	538
XX.	Of Clerks	543
XXI.	Of Vacant Congregations	550
XXII.	Of Commissioners to the General Assembly	552
XXIII.	Of Amendments	564
	Constitutional Rule No. 1. Local Evangelists	565
	Constitutional Rule No. 2. Examination in English Bible	566
	Worship of God by Offerings	567
	Differences between Judicatories	569
	Increase of the Ministry	570
	Ministerial Adjustment	572
	Control of Theological Seminaries	572
	Young People's Societies	575
	Index	579

INTRODUCTORY.

What is the Church?

"The invisible Church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the Head." "The visible Church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children." *

What is the present condition of the visible Church?

It is composed of various denominations, or churches, which, while holding to Christ the Head, and receiving the Scriptures as the inspired revelation of his truth and will, are distinguished from each other by their creeds, forms of worship and polities.

What are the principal kinds of church government?

1. THE PAPAL. Its characteristics are, "a vicar of Christ, a perpetual college of Apostles, and the people subject to their infallible control."

2. THE PRELATICAL, which teaches "the perpetuity of the apostleship as the governing power in the Church, which therefore consists of those who profess the true religion and are subject to apostle-bishops." Its Low Church form asserts that "there was originally a threefold order in the ministry, and that there should be now.

* *Larger Catechism*, Qq. 62 and 64.

But it does not affirm that mode of organization to be essential."

3. THE INDEPENDENT, which holds that "the governing and executive power in the Church is in the brotherhood," and "that the church organization is complete in each worshiping assembly, which is independent of every other." *

4. THE CONGREGATIONAL, which maintains that "all ecclesiastical power resides in the church, or the associated body of the brethren," and that the churches, which "live in close fraternal union, are associated together in bodies, and often ask and receive advice and help from each other; but all this is the result of mutual confidence and affection, not of any superior power." The independence of the churches is claimed in the right of each to choose its own officers, determine its creed, judge its members and formulate its worship. The community of the churches is expressed in Councils, called in emergencies, and which have only advisory power.†

5. THE PRESBYTERIAN, which holds that "the people have a right to a substantial part in the government of the Church," by representatives generally called Ruling Elders; that "the Presbyters who minister in word and doctrine are the highest permanent officers of the Church, and all belong to the same order;" and that "the outward and visible Church is, or should be, one, in the sense that a smaller part is subject to a larger, and a larger to the whole," as in courts of appeal.‡

What portions of the Reformed Church are Presbyterian?

The Protestant churches of France, Holland, Germany,

* *What is Presbyterianism*, pp. 5, 6.
† *Congregational Manual*, pp. 6–11.
‡ *What is Presbyterianism*, pp. 6, 7.

Switzerland, Scotland, Ireland and portions of the dissenting churches of England, and those in this country and Canada planted by them.* This list is very imperfect, as may be seen in the list of churches in the Presbyterian Alliance. To it should be added the Presbyterian Church of Wales, Mission Church of Belgium, Waldensian Church of Italy, Reformed Church of East Friesland, Evangelical Church of Spain, the Reformed churches of Bohemia and Moravia, in the Netherlands, in Russia, the Free Italian Church, Reformed Dutch Church in Cape Colony, in Orange Free State, in Natal, in South Africa, in Australia, in New Zealand, in Otago, in Ceylon and in New Hebrides.† To this list should be added also the various mission churches established in heathen lands.

Did Presbyterianism originate with the Reformers?

The three great principles of Presbyterianism—viz. government by Elders, the parity of the ministry and courts of appeals—have always been recognized in the Church of God. (See Ex. 3 : 16; 18 : 25, 26; Num. 11 : 16.) For the ceremonial services (which were typical and temporary) there were Priests of various orders. But the teaching Elders, or Scribes, or Doctors of the law, were of the same order. The Apostles, who were extraordinary and temporary officers,‡ ordained Elders in every church, and in their Epistles distinguished between those who "rule well" and those who "labor in word and doctrine" (Acts 15 : 25; 1 Tim. 5 : 17). The most ancient churches still extant, or of whose government we have information, were Presbyterian; as the

* *Miller on Presbyterianism*, p. 20.

† *Report of Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance*, pp 5, 9; *Third General Council*, pp. 14–23.

‡ See p. 42.

Waldensian and Bohemian churches, the Syrian in the far East, the ancient British churches, and the Culdee Church in Iona, Scotland, which land had received Christianity, according to Tertullian and Baronius, before the death of John. These churches claim to have received their form of government from the Apostles' teaching and practice. Calvin and the other Reformers derived their principles of polity and discipline from the Scriptures, and from these ancient churches.*

What is the earliest record of a Presbytery in England?

In 1572 a Presbytery was formed at Wandsworth, near London. In 1574, T. Cartwright republished Travers' work under the title, "A full and Plaine Declaration of Ecclesiastical Discipline out of the Word of God." In 1584 a national Synod in London revised a book which was called the "Holy Discipline," and which before 1590 was subscribed by five hundred Ministers in England.†

What book of polity was adopted by the Church of Scotland at the Reformation?

"Previous to the legal establishment of the Protestant religion in 1560, the 'Book of Common Order,' used by the English church at Geneva, was generally followed as the rule of worship and discipline by the Scotch Reformers; but that being found inadequate to the regulation of a Church consisting of numerous congregations, a 'Book of Discipline' adapted to the state of the Church was soon after that event urged upon Parliament," but it dissolved without action. The same year a "Book of Policy," or "First Book of Discipline," was approved by the Gen-

* *Name, Nature and Function of Ruling Elder*, p. 78; *The Culdee Church*, pp. 33–51 and 65–72; *Miller on Presbyterianism*, pp. 9–22 *Primitive Church Offices*, pp. 1–67.

† *Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 23.

eral Assembly. This, while sanctioned by the Church, was never formally approved by the civil authorities. "The Second Book of Discipline" was adopted by the General Assembly in 1578; and according to it the church government was established in 1592.*

When did the Westminster Assembly of Divines meet?

This Assembly of Ministers and laymen met by order of Parliament July 1, 1643, and closed February 22, 1649. Its sessions were in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey. Great dissatisfaction had been caused by the introduction of new ceremonies, the enforcement of the "Book of Sunday Sports," the expulsion of Puritan clergy, and the effort to force the Episcopal liturgy upon the Scottish churches. This Assembly was called "to be consulted with by Parliament for settling of the government and the liturgy of the Church of England, and for the vindication of the doctrine of the said Church from false aspersions and interpretations." In October of the same year Parliament ordered the members to "confer and treat among themselves of such discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, etc., to be settled in this Church, in stead and place of the present church government by Archbishops, Bishops, etc., which is resolved to be taken away, and touching and concerning the directory of worship, or liturgy, hereafter to be in the Church." The Assembly had no ecclesiastical authority, but was to confer with Parliament on these subjects. Of those appointed members of the Assembly, twenty were Ministers of the Church of England; many of these were prevented from taking their seats by a proclamation from the king forbidding the meeting of the Assembly. At the open-

* *The Church of God*, by Stuart Robinson, Appendix, pp. iv., xvii.

ing there were sixty-nine Ministers present. Most of these were Presbyterians, ten were Independents and six were Erastians (holding that the Church is subordinate to the State). The whole number of delegates was one hundred and twenty Ministers and thirty laymen. In 1644 the Assembly submitted to Parliament "The Directory for Public Worship;" in 1646, "The Confession of Faith;" in 1647, "The Larger and Shorter Catechisms." These were adopted immediately by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. In England the "Directory for Public Worship" and the "Confession of Faith" were ratified by Parliament. These, with the Assembly's Catechisms, became the standards of the English and of the Irish Presbyterian churches, but the restoration of the Stuarts re-established Episcopacy in its former authority in England.* The 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Westminster Standards was observed by our General Assembly in 1898.†

Which was the first Presbyterian church in America?

This is uncertain. The first Presbyterian church of New York was planted by the Reformed Church of Holland in 1628. Rev. James M. Macdonald claimed that the Presbyterian church of Jamaica, L. I., was "the oldest Presbyterian church established by the English in America." It was organized in 1672.‡ Dr. Gillett grants that this is "more than possible." The Rev. Francis Makemie organized a church at Rehoboth, Somerset co., Md. "All the circumstances point to the establishment of that church from 1684 to 1686." There were at least three

* *American Cyclopædia. Constitutional History of Presbyterian Church,* pp. 23-26; *Westminster Assembly* (A. F. Mitchell), pp. 370, 407.

† *Minutes G. A., 1898,* pp. 91-93, 120.

‡ *Two Centuries in the History of the Presbyterian Church, Jamaica,* pp. 57, 76.

churches in Maryland in 1691: at Rehoboth, Makemie Pastor; at Snow Hill, S. Davis Pastor; and at Princess Ann, T. Wilson Pastor. Records have been recently discovered "incidentally showing the establishment of the church in Maryland to have been the first upon this continent." *

According to Dr. Gillett, the Presbyterian church at Snow Hill, Md., organized in 1684 by Makemie, was the first church of our order in the country. But he adds, "It is probable, indeed, that other Presbyterian congregations had been gathered before this in other localities." † The church of Snow Hill was "founded by Makemie after he had established the church at Rehoboth." ‡ Four others in that State date nearly as far back. Those in Freehold and Woodbridge, in New Jersey, were established in 1692. The first church formed in Philadelphia was in 1698. Presbyterian churches were planted very early in New Castle, Delaware, and in Charleston, South Carolina. § A large proportion of the Puritans who settled New England were Presbyterians, but the first-comers were Congregationalists, and with these the Presbyterians identified themselves. Presbyterian churches were, however, early planted in New England. The first, probably, was in 1710 in Mansfield, Connecticut; its members were ruled by eight Elders; its first Minister continued in his pastorate over thirty-one years. In 1741 a Presbyterian church was organized at Milford, Connecticut, and was connected with the Presbytery of

* *Second General Council Presbyterian Alliance*, p. 800.
† *Gillett's History of the Presbyterian Church*, i., pp. 4, 5.
‡ *Second General Council Presbyterian Alliance*, p. 801.
§ *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iii., Introduction.

New Brunswick.* Besides these there was a French Presbyterian church in Boston, Massachusetts, formed by Huguenots in 1687.†

Which was the first Presbytery organized in America?

The Presbytery of Philadelphia, which was organized probably early in 1704. The first page of the records is lost. The book begins with a fragment of the minutes of a meeting of the Presbytery held at Freehold, New Jersey, December 26, 1706. It consisted of seven Ministers, and was called to examine, and to hear the trial-pieces of, Mr. John Boyd; and on the next Lord's Day, December 29th, the Presbytery ordained him "in the public meeting-house of this place, before a numerous assembly."‡ In 1718 a large number of Presbyterians, with four Ministers, came to New England from the north of Ireland. The Ministers and Elders assembled as often as possible, yet somewhat informally. In cases of difficulty they sought advice from the Synod of Ireland. This informal Presbytery continued until 1745, when it was regularly organized as the Boston Presbytery. It consisted at first of six Ministers.§

When was the first Synod held?

In September, 1716, the Presbytery declared that "it having pleased Divine Providence so to increase our number as that, after much deliberation, we judge it may be more serviceable to the interest of religion to divide ourselves into subordinate meetings or Presbyteries, constituting one annually, as a Synod, to meet at Philadelphia or elsewhere, to consist of all the members

* *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iii., Introduction.
† *Connecticut Historical Collections*, pp. 234, 552.
‡ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 9.
§ *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iii., Introduction.

of each subordinate Presbytery or meeting for this year at least; therefore it is agreed by the Presbytery, after serious deliberation, that the first subordinate meeting or Presbytery, to meet at Philadelphia or elsewhere as they shall see fit, do consist of these following members" (six Ministers). "And the second, to meet at New Castle" (consisting of six Ministers). "And the third, to meet at Snow Hill" (of three Ministers). And the Ministers on Long Island were urged to use their best endeavors with brethren settled there to join in forming a fourth Presbytery. The Synod was called the Synod of Philadelphia.*

When was the first General Assembly held?

In 1788 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia unanimously resolved to divide itself into four Synods —viz. the Synod of New York and New Jersey, the Synod of Philadelphia, the Synod of Virginia and the Synod of the Carolinas; and "that the first meeting of the General Assembly, to be constituted out of the above said four Synods, be held, and it is hereby appointed to be held, on the third Thursday of May, 1789, in the Second Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia, at eleven o'clock A. M., and that Dr. Witherspoon, or in his absence Dr. Rodgers, open the General Assembly with a sermon, and preside until a Moderator be chosen." The former of these Ministers preached and presided during the organization, and the latter was then elected the first regular Moderator.†

When were the Westminster Standards adopted?

In 1729 the Synod of Philadelphia, the original Synod and the supreme court of the Church, adopted the "Confession of Faith" and the "Larger and Shorter Catechisms"

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 45.

† *Ibid.*, p. 547; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 260.

of the Westminster Assembly, and agreed that all its members, present and future, shall declare their agreement in and approbation of these standards, "as being, in all the essential and necessary articles, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine," and shall also adopt them as the confession of their faith. The same day all the members of Synod complied with this order, personally adopting these standards, except one Minister, who gave in his adherence the next year.

The Synod further declared that "they judge the 'Directory for Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church,' commonly annexed to the Westminster Confession, to be agreeable in substance to the word of God, and founded thereon, and therefore do earnestly recommend the same to all their members, to be by them observed as near as circumstances will allow and Christian prudence direct." *

In this adopting act the Synod unanimously declared that they did not receive the clauses in the twentieth and twenty-third chapters "in any such sense as to suppose the civil magistrate hath a controlling power over Synods with respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority, or power to persecute any for their religion, or in any sense contrary to the Protestant succession to the throne of Great Britain." These articles, thus excepted to, were altered after the independence of the United States was established, and the Synod considered "the Church of Christ as a spiritual society entirely distinct from the civil government, having a right to regulate their own ecclesiastical policy, independently of the interposition of the magistrate." †

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 94, 95.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 4.

The language used in adopting the "Directory and Form of Church Government" was chosen "because we believe the general platform of our government to be agreeable to the Sacred Scriptures; but we do not believe that God has been pleased so to reveal and enjoin every minute circumstance of ecclesiastical government and discipline as not to leave room for orthodox churches of Christ, in these minutiæ, to differ with charity from one another."

The Synod, preparatory to forming the General Assembly, ordered a thorough revision of the standards, and a committee was appointed to digest a system of discipline and government adapted to the state of the Church in this country. The draught of the "Form of Government and Discipline" was adopted in 1788 as the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, and it was ordered to be strictly observed as the rule of their proceedings by all the inferior judicatories. It was resolved, "that the 'Form of Government and Discipline' and the 'Confession' as now ratified is to continue to be our constitution and the confession of our faith and practice, unalterable unless two-thirds of the Presbyteries under the care of the General Assembly shall propose alterations or amendments, and such alterations or amendments shall be agreed to by the General Assembly."* At the same time the "Directory of Worship" was revised and approved and ratified. The "Larger" and "Shorter Catechisms," with a slight amendment to the "Larger," were also approved; and these, the "Confession of Faith," the "Catechisms," the "Form of Government and Discipline" and the "Directory of Worship," were declared to be "the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." The proof-texts and notes

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 8.

were afterward added, but were not made part of the constitution.* In 1894 they were revised.† In 1896 the standards were declared to be subordinate to the Word of God.‡

When were these Standards revised and amended?

In 1804 and 1805 a revision was made "to explain, render more practicable and bring nearer to perfection the general system." In 1821 the revision of the Form of Government, etc. was made.§ The Book of Discipline was revised in 1884.§ A committee was appointed in 1889 to revise the Confession of Faith, but was required "not to propose any alterations or amendments that will in any way impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system taught in the Confession of Faith." ‖ Their report was rejected in 1893 by the Presbyteries.¶

What is the seal of the General Assembly?

In 1892 the Assembly adopted an official seal, an impression of which is here given.**

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 6, 15.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 21–26.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 20.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 12.
‖ *Minutes G. A., 1890*, pp. 85, 86, 122–125, 127.
¶ *Ibid., 1893*, p. 198.
** *Ibid., 1892*, p. 32.

THE

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

AND

FORMS OF PROCESS

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

AS AMENDED 1805-1894.

BOOK I.

OF GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLES.

When was this chapter drawn up?

With the exception of the first sentence, it was prepared by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia and prefixed to the "Form of Government" in 1788, as that body was about to divide itself into four Synods and give place to the General Assembly, which met the next year.* The war of the Revolution had closed, having secured the independence of the United States and produced changes in the relations of the Church to the State. This, together with the increase in numbers, led the Synod to perfect the organization of the Church, and

* *Form of Government*, ch. i., note.

made this declaration of preliminary principles timely and necessary.*

What was the object of declaring these principles?

"*This, it is hoped, will in some measure, prevent rash misconstructions and uncandid reflections, which usually proceed from an imperfect view of any subject; as well as make the several parts of the system plain, and the whole perspicuous and fully understood.*"

I. What is the first principle?

"*God alone is Lord of the conscience; and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship.*" †

What is Christian liberty?

It is not license to "oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical," for that is resistance of the ordinances of God. Nor is it a right to hold and publish opinions "contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation." Christian liberty is the unrestrained and entire submission to God as his will is made known in nature and revelation. Its end is "that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." ‡

What is the right of private judgment?

The liberty and obligation, which belong to every man, of examining the word of God, and determining for himself its meaning. It is denied by the ritualists,

* *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iii., Introduction.

† *Confession of Faith*, ch. xx., sect. ii.; ch. xxi., sect. i.

‡ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xx.

who teach that "the chief officers of the Church, without regard to character, are the organs of the Spirit, and that all private Christians are bound to submit without hesitation to all their decisions." "But according to the Scriptures it is the duty of every Christian to try the spirits whether they be of God, to reject an Apostle, or an angel from heaven, should he deny the faith; and of that denial such Christian is of necessity the judge." * The right of private judgment is therefore a divine right, and must be considered, "*in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable.*" No creed or polity should be enforced by the State: our Church does "*not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and, at the same time, be equal and common to all others.*"

What is the province of the civil government?

It has no right to grant special countenance or support to any part of the Church. Its duty is to afford equal and common protection, that men may worship God according to their consciences.† "No principle has been better established in regard to this nation than the entire separation of the Church and the State; and the State has no more right to compel by taxation one of its citizens to contribute money to the building up and advancing of the Roman Catholic or any other denomination than it has to compel us to unite with their Church." Our Assembly in 1894 protested against the donation of public funds for ecclesiastical uses, and in 1898 against the proposed erection of a R. C. chapel at West Point.‡

II. What is the second principle?

"*Every Christian Church, or union or association of*

* *Church Polity*, pp. 37 and 406. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 154.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 297, 298; *Minutes G. A., 1898*, p. 122.

particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its Ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed." This principle is essential to all organizations. Men are at liberty to refuse to be connected with a society, but if they voluntarily enter, they must submit to its terms of admission and to its laws. So if any man's conscience will not permit him to concur with, or passively submit to, the standards of the Church, he "shall, after sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate, peaceably withdraw from our communion, without attempting to make any schism." Provided that which he cannot accept shall be judged by the Church to be indispensable to Presbyterian doctrine or polity.* This of course refers only to the officers of the Church, who are required to receive and adopt the standards of the Church.† But communicants are received on profession of faith in the Lord Jesus.‡

May the Church err in the exercise of this right?

Churches, "*in the exercise of this right, may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet even in this case they do not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only make an improper use of their own.*"

III. What is the third principle?

"*That our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments,*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 28; *Minutes G. A., 1898*, p. 108.

† *Form of Government*, chs. xiii. and xv.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. x. See p. 141.

but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both of truth and duty."

What duties have the officers?

Those which were appointed by Christ—viz. "*to preach the gospel,*" "*administer the sacraments*" and "*exercise discipline.*" "*It is incumbent upon these officers and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous; observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the word of God.*" Their authority is therefore only declarative, announcing what Christ has revealed, and applying his law according to his direction.

IV. What is the fourth principle?

"*That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness, according to our Saviour's rule, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'*"

What is the connection between truth and goodness?

Truth is the only source of goodness, and goodness is the fruit and test of truth. "*No opinion can be more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are.*" "*There is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.*"

V. What is the fifth principle?

"*There are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ.*" And in all these it is "*the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.*"

How is this mutual forbearance to be manifested?

By recognition of the Christian and church character

and relation of others (Mark 9 : 38–40; Rom. 14); by patiently teaching the way of the Lord more perfectly, and by maintaining and practicing the truth, but without offence and without judging others (Gal. 2 : 3–5, 11–14; Rom. 14 : 1–23; 1 Cor. 10 : 32; 2 Cor. 6 : 3; Matt. 7 : 1; James 4 : 11).

May persons be received into the communion of the Church who do not fully agree with the Standards of the Church?

All are to be received "who in the judgment of charity are the sincere disciples of Jesus Christ," making profession of their faith, love and obedience to him. They are received to be instructed in the doctrines of the Church.*

Must the officers be sound in faith?

"*It is necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith.*" †

VI. What is the sixth principle?

"*The election of persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society.*"

What officers can be appointed in the church?

"*The character, qualifications and authority of church officers, are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution.*"

By whom are officers to be chosen?

The right of election belongs to those over whom the authority is to be exercised. Pastors, Ruling Elders and Deacons must be elected by the particular churches in which they hold office.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 307; Rom. 14 : 1.

† *Form of Government*, chs. xiii., xiv. and xv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 8–12.

‡ *Form of Government*, chs. xiii., xiv., xv.

VII. What is the seventh principle?

"*All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative.*"

What is meant by this?

"*That the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience, in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God.*"

Whence comes the danger in the exercise of church power?

"*All synods and councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity; yet there is much greater danger from the usurped claim of making laws, than from the right of judging upon laws already made and common to to all who profess the gospel; although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men.*"

VIII. What is the eighth principle?

"*The vigor and strictness of its discipline will contribute to the glory and happiness of any Church.*"

How can this be shown?

"*Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church universal.*" It is not the exercise of human power, but the application of divine laws. It is enforced by appeal to the infallible word of God and to Christ the great Head of the Church. Its object is to secure to the Church sound doctrine, godly living, encouragement to the well doing and correction to the erring.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE CHURCH.

I. Who established the Church on earth?

"*Jesus Christ, who is now exalted far above all principality and power, hath erected in this world a kingdom, which is his Church.*"

When was the Church established?

After the Fall, when the first promise of redemption was made (Gen. 3 : 15; 6 : 18). The Church, while passing through different dispensations, has been always the same, having had but one system of doctrines, more and more clearly revealed; one form of worship, becoming simpler and more spiritual as types and ceremonies accomplished their appointed office and ceased; and one form of government in its essential principles (Acts 7 : 38; Luke 1 : 68–79; Rev. 13 : 8; John 4 : 21–26; Ex. 3 : 15, 16; Num. 11 : 25; Acts 14 : 23).

The "Form of Government" adopted in 1879 by the (Southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States says, "The visible Church, before the law, under the law, and now under the gospel, is one and the same, and consists of all those who make profession of the true religion, together with their children." *

When was the Christian Church established?

After the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost (John 20 : 21, 22; Acts 1 : 8; 3 : 1–47).

Is Christ still the Head of his Church?

He is, and ever shall be (Eph. 1 : 20–22; Ps. 68 : 18; Dan. 7 : 14).

* *Book of Church Order*, ch. ii., sect. ii

II. Of whom does the universal Church consist?

"Of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws."

Wherein consists the unity of the Church?

Not in outward organization, nor in allegiance to any visible head, but in union with Christ, belief in and profession of his religion, and submission to his authority. In 1887 a memorial from the Protestant Episcopal Church led to the appointment of a Committee on Church Unity. In 1894 the Assembly expressed its cordial sympathy with the growing desire among Evangelical churches for practical unity and coöperation, reaffirming former deliverances. It affirmed that all believers form one mystical body in Christ. This Church includes believers and their children. Mutual recognition and reciprocity is the first essential step toward practical unity. In 1896 the Committee was discharged from further conference with the Commission of the Episcopal Church.*

III. How can this universal Church worship?

"As this immense multitude cannot meet together in one place, to hold communion, or to worship God, it is reasonable and warranted by Scripture example, that they should be divided into many particular churches." While sacrifices and the great feasts were observed only at Jerusalem, the people assembled every Sabbath day in their separate synagogues to worship and to be taught by their Elders. Christ's custom was to go into the synagogue every Sabbath, and the Apostles organized churches throughout Judæa, Syria and the whole Roman empire.

IV. What is a particular church?

"A particular church consists of a number of professing

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118.

Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together, for divine worship and godly living, and submitting to a certain form of government."

What is the object of their association?

"*Worship*"—prayer and praise to God, and instruction from him—and "*godly living*" through mutual sympathy and helpfulness in the reception and application of the word of God.

What is necessary to the orderly accomplishment of this object?

"*Submitting to a certain form of government.*" It should be well devised, written and in the hands of all (Heb. 8 : 5; Gal. 6 : 16). Unwritten usage is uncertain and changeable, and causes confusion.

What is a particular Presbyterian church?

"A particular Presbyterian church, so far as adults are concerned, is constituted and organized, as such, by a number of individuals professing to walk together as the disciples of Jesus Christ, on the principles of the 'Confession of Faith' and 'Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church,' and the election and ordination of one or more Ruling Elders, who, by the ordination-service, become the spiritual rulers of the persons voluntarily submitting themselves to their authority in the Lord."*

How may a new church be formed?

Persons desiring to be associated as a church should draw up and sign a petition to Presbytery expressing their desire, the need of such an organization and the prospects of usefulness. They should appoint suitable persons to present and urge their petition before Presbytery. "The organization ought always to be made by

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 119.

application to the Presbytery within the bounds of which the church to be organized is found, unless this be exceedingly inconvenient, in which case it may be done by a duly-authorized Missionary or a neighboring Minister of the gospel" (1831).*

Is a Minister, ex-officio, authorized to organize churches without an order of Presbytery?

"Except in frontier and destitute settlements, where, by 'Form of Government,' ch. xv., sect. xv., it is made a part of the business of Evangelists to organize churches, and except in cases where it is exceedingly inconvenient to make application to a Presbytery (for which provision is made in the act of Assembly of 1831),* it is not the prerogative of a Minister of the gospel to organize churches without the previous action of some Presbytery directing or permitting it; since in 'Form of Government,' ch. x., sect. viii., to form new congregations is enumerated among the powers of the Presbytery, and since in ch. iv., 'Of Bishops or Pastors,' no mention is made of any such power being lodged in the hands of an individual Minister."†

Who should sign the petition?

All desiring the formation of the church. The petition should state who are prepared to become members of the new church on certificate, who on profession of faith, and who are ready to contribute to its support, that all the facts may be before Presbytery.

May the Presbytery refuse the petition?

This is implied in the powers granted to Presbytery.† "It is inexpedient and contrary to the expressed spirit of the Church to multiply church organizations in any field already well supplied with gospel privileges, and

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 119. † *Ibid.*, p. 217.

especially so when the churches occupying the field are closely related to us in doctrine and polity. . . . We think it unwise, and a waste of the means and power of the Church, to organize separate churches when the persons desiring such organizations are not only few in number, but may be supplied with church privileges by existing Presbyterian churches." *

How is the organization effected?

The Presbytery should appoint a committee of Ministers and Elders to meet the petitioners. The presiding Minister should preach. After prayer the committee "should first receive from those persons desiring to be organized into the new church, if they have been communicants in other churches, letters of dismission and recommendation, and in the next place examine and admit to a profession of faith such persons as may offer themselves and may be judged suitable to be received on examination. If any of these persons admitted to a profession on examination have not been baptized, they should at this stage of the business be made subjects of Christian baptism." Those thus received "should now by some public act, such as rising, joining hands or subscribing a written statement, agree and covenant to walk together in a church relation according to the acknowledged doctrines and order of the Presbyterian Church." The next step is to proceed to the election and ordination of Ruling Elders and Deacons, in conformity with directions given on this subject in the "Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church." Deacons are to be elected and ordained in like manner as in the case of Ruling Elders. These officers are elected by the communicants and ordained by the presiding Minister. The new church

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 218.

should be declared to be duly organized as "The ——— Church of ———, under the care of ——— Presbytery." The name is to be chosen by the communicants. The service should be closed with prayer and the benediction. The committee should report at the next meeting of Presbytery, and the name of the church should be enrolled.*

"When, however, proper persons cannot be found among the communicants for church officers, all the facts should be reported to Presbytery, which should regard the organization as potentially a church, and therefore entitled to enrollment and supervision, but as imperfect in its condition, being disqualified, lacking proper officers, from exercising government and discipline and from representation in the judicatories of the church. The Presbytery should therefore appoint a Special Committee to take the oversight of the church, and to secure, as soon as possible, the election of proper officers—Ruling Elders and Deacons—that it may perform all the functions of a Presbyterian church."† The death, or removal, of all its officers would not disorganize a church.

May a church be formed beyond the bounds of Presbyteries?

This is part of the work of an Evangelist "in frontier and destitute settlements."‡ It is his duty, however, "as soon as practicable to report to some Presbytery, with which it may be most naturally and conveniently connected, the time and manner of its organization, and desire to be received under the care of said Presbytery."* "Under the existing law of the Church, Presbyteries only are competent to ordain Ministers; and the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 119.
† *Ibid.*, p. 122.
‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xv.

Assembly also judges that churches organized in foreign missionary-fields, where no Presbytery exists, may, with the consent of the Synod, be enrolled by the Presbytery to which the Missionary on the field belongs." *

May a church be formed without the presence of a Minister?

Full organization is impossible without the presence of a Minister.† But a congregation may be formed by those desiring to be associated for worship. They should apply to the nearest Presbytery for recognition and full organization, and make provision for regular services.‡

What should be done when suitable persons cannot be found to be chosen as Ruling Elders?

"The people may, and ought to, obtain a preacher of the gospel to labor among them, and occasionally to administer ordinances, under the direction of some Presbytery," until they can "make a proper choice of Ruling Elders." ‡

What is an imperfectly-organized church?

An organized church, therefore, has recognized communicants and ordained officers. Under the Plan of Union § many churches were formed without ordained Elders. They had standing committees, which to some extent performed the duties of a Session. The "committee-men" were permitted to represent their churches in the higher courts until 1837, when the Plan of Union was abrogated. They continued, however, to be recognized by the N. S. Assembly. One of the terms of reunion was, "that imperfectly-organized churches were to become thoroughly Presbyterian within five years." ‖ In 1880 the Assembly received an overture asking that

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 194. † See p. 310.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 120. See p. 33.
§ See p. 277. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 36.

the Presbyteries be enjoined "to institute immediate and efficient measures whereby the churches, which at the reunion of the O. S. and N. S. were imperfectly organized by being governed by committee-men or unordained men, may fully and speedily complete their organization." The Assembly, however, expressed confidence in the loyalty, diligence and discretion of the Presbyteries, and referred the matter to their attention.* In 1881, referring to this action, the Assembly declared that it had "no official information as to the non-compliance, by any of the churches here referred to, with the Concurrent Declarations. As, however, the term for such imperfectly-organized churches to become thoroughly Presbyterian has long since passed, the Assembly feels compelled to remind, in this particular, any and all delinquent churches of their duty, and to express its conviction that, in the adoption of this Concurrent Declaration by the Assemblies of 1869, both bodies are solemnly bound to obey it." †

May the Presbytery recognize an unorganized congregation?

Yes. Even when refusing to erect the petitioners into a church, it may recognize them as a congregation and send them supplies for their pulpit.‡

What is a congregation?

In our "Form of Government" the word "congregation" is sometimes used for an organized church,§ but often a distinction is made between the church and the congregation. The former is composed of believers and their children under regularly-ordained officers. The congre-

* *Minutes General Assembly 1880*, p. 46. † *Ibid., 1881*, p. 591.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 120.

§ *Form of Government*, ch. ix.

gation is sometimes used, as in the "Directory for Worship," ch. i., to designate those who assemble in one place for public worship; and sometimes, as in "Form of Government," ch. xv., the church, together with those who contribute to the support of the work of the church, and, according to the custom, or the charter of the particular church, or the laws of the State, form a recognized body, with certain powers, chiefly in relation to the holding of property. By our "Form of Government" every communicant of the church is a member of the congregation, and has a voice in everything that comes before it;* but the usage or charter of the particular church may determine who else may be members of the congregation—sometimes the heads of families, or all male contributors, or all persons who do anything for the support of the church, and in some cases only those males who are admitted by vote and who sign articles of association. The congregation, thus composed, can of course have no spiritual jurisdiction, but can consider questions of property and such matters as the "Form of Government" may refer to it, as the choice of a Pastor. †

Can a particular church organized by Presbytery hold property?

Not without being incorporated according to the laws of the State. "The utmost care" should be taken, in applying for charters, "to ask for nothing which, if granted, will in any respect contravene the principles or order of our Church." "In any case in which civil enactments, heretofore obtained, do militate with any of the principles or order of our Church," the congregations should "endeavor, as soon as possible, to obtain

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 164.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xv., and *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 564.

the repeal or modification of such enactments, so as to make them consistent with the ecclesiastical order and principles of the Presbyterian Church." * As the Presbytery has oversight of everything which concerns the prosperity of the church,† the charter ought to be submitted to the Presbytery for its approval. In some States there is a general law of incorporation under which a congregation may become a body corporate. The law should be carefully examined and its terms minutely carried out. When, however, the general law is found to be inconsistent with the Presbyterian "Form of Government," application should be made for a special charter.‡ Presbyteries should appoint a Permanent Standing Committee on Church Property to examine the civil and ecclesiastic character of the charters of new and existing churches.§

What is a society?

In some States the general law of incorporation recognizes a body called the "society," which is empowered to hold property for the church. It consists of male members (whether communicants or not) associated to manage the finances of the congregation. The law determines the condition of membership and the power to be exercised. In the Congregational Church this is an important body and holds its meetings independently of the church. In many things the vote of the church can have no effect until the society has met and concurred, as in the election of a Pastor.§ In some Presbyterian churches also the society is a distinct body (under the State law) from the congre-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 122. † See pp. 231, 232.

‡ For a form of an act of incorporation and by-laws see *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, pp. 307–314.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1889*, p. 17.

gation and from the church. In others the word is used to designate the congregation. As a separate body, however, it is foreign to our "Form of Government."

Is it consistent with our polity that a board of Trustees should hold the property of the church?

Trustees may hold and manage the property of the church when elected according to the principles of our "Form of Government" and duly incorporated. They cannot have control of the funds collected for the poor of the church or for the Lord's table: this duty belongs to the Deacons. The board should be elected according to the charter, and should at least once a year present a full report to the congregation. The officers, powers and continuance of the board are determined by the charter. The Pastor of the church, by virtue of his office, has no right to sit with or preside over the board.

By whom are Trustees to be elected?

"The Communicant male and female members in good standing, and in addition, such other persons as contribute by regular payments at stated periods to the support and necessary expenses of the Congregation in accordance with its rules; Provided that nothing in this regulation shall be valid which contravenes the provisions of the laws of any of the States, of the United States, or of special church charters." Communicants in good standing can be deprived of their right to vote only by due process of discipline. "The rolls of communicant members in good standing in the possession of the clerk of Session and the lists of regular contributors in the possession of the secretary or treasurer of the board of Trustees, shall be the authoritative lists of voters at Church and Congregational meet-

ings." * Only Communicants can vote for Elders and Deacons. See pages 56, 68.

How may a meeting of the congregation be called to elect Trustees or to consider financial affairs?

According to the charter or usage of the church. At such meeting the congregation may elect its officers. The Clerk should keep a full record in a book provided for that purpose. An aggrieved minority may complain to the Session or to the Presbytery. No vote of a congregation can affect the rights of a communicant.†

May the Deacons take charge of the church property?

Yes, if in accordance with the charter. Some regard the Deacons as the only proper Trustees under our polity.‡ In 1833 the Assembly declared that, in addition to the poor fund, "the temporalities of the church generally may be committed to their care." § The Trustees should be Christian men.‖

In what other way may church property be held?

In some cases the title is vested in one or more individuals. This is often done until a charter can be obtained, or until persons can be found in the congregation qualified to be Trustees. Individual control of church property is never advisable. A better plan is that the Presbytery obtain a charter, for itself or for a board of Trustees chosen by it, to hold property within its bounds for missionary or small churches, until they be able to organize and take charge of the property, and of defunct churches. Or the Board of Church Erection may hold the property in trust.¶

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 878.
† *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, pp. 36, 39.
‡ *Form of Government*, ch. vi.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 152.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1837*, p. 119.
¶ *Ibid., 1889*, p. 17.

What power have Trustees over church property?

This is determined by the charter and the State laws. "They have no moral right to convert the house of God into a place of business or amusement." So the O. S. Assembly declared in 1860. In 1863 it gave a fuller deliverance: that "the custody and care of the property pertains to them for the uses and purposes for which they hold the trust"—that is, "for the worship of God and the employment of such other means of spiritual improvement as may be consistent with the Scriptures and according to the order of the Church." "The Session is charged with the supervision of the spiritual interests of the congregation; and this includes the right to direct and control the use of the building for the purposes of worship." "The Trustees are bound to respect the wishes and action of the Session as to the use and occupation of the house of worship. The Session is the organ or agent through whom the Trustees are informed how and when the church building is to be occupied; and the Trustees have no right to refuse compliance." If the house is desired for other purposes than for worship, the Trustees may refuse, but they have no right to grant it for purposes which the Session disapprove. If they go contrary to the expressed wishes of the Session, the proper appeal is first to the congregation, to whom the Trustees are responsible, then to the Presbytery, and finally, if necessary, to the legal tribunals.* In 1874 our Assembly decided "that the constitution of our Church charges the Session with the supervision of the spiritual interests of the congregation, and all the services and matters pertaining thereto; and that any action by the board of Trustees unauthorized by the congrega-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 124.

tion, tending to annul or contravene in any way such supervision and control, is illegal and void;" "that, as regards the church building, Sabbath-school and lecture-room, the Trustees have no right to grant or withhold the the use of either against the wishes or consent of the Session."* In 1892 a committee was appointed on the methods of managing the temporalities of the Church. The next year they were empowered to make a digest of the laws of the several States, which was in 1894 ordered to be published.† The Supreme Court of the United States in 1872 decided "that in the use of property for all religious services or ecclesiastical purposes the Trustees are under the control of the church Session." "They are subject, in their official relation to the property, to the control of the Session of the church." ‡

CHAPTER III.

OF THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

I. By whom was the Christian Church collected?

"*Our blessed Lord at first collected his Church out of different nations, and formed it into one body, by the mission of men endued with miraculous gifts, which have long since ceased.*"

What were these officers called?

Apostles, Disciples, or The Twelve.§ Mathias was chosen in the place of Judas Iscariot.‖ And Paul was called the Apostle to the Gentiles.¶

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 123, 124. See p. 162.

† *Ibid.*, p. 122.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 125–142.

§ Matt. 10 : 2–4.

‖ Acts 1 : 16–26.

¶ Rom. 1 : 1; Gal. 1 : 1, 11–24; 2 : 7, 8.

What was an Apostle?

An Apostle was an immediate messenger of Christ, a witness of his doctrine and of his resurrection (Acts 1 : 21, 22; 1 Cor. 9 : 1).

What was the special work of the Apostles?

To testify of Christ, in his name and by his authority to declare the doctrine, worship and polity of the Christian Church, and to superintend its establishment and extension (Acts 1 : 8; 26 : 16; Gal. 1 : 12; 1 Cor. 5 : 3–5; 2 Cor. 10 : 8; 11 : 28).

Were they confined to this work?

No. They were also Ministers, Elders and Fellow-servants (Eph. 3 : 7; 1 Pet. 5 : 1; Rom. 15 : 25).

What were their peculiar gifts?

(1) Inspiration (John 14 : 26; 16 : 13); (2) miraculous powers (Matt. 10 : 8); (3) impartation of the Holy Ghost to others by the imposition of hands (Acts 8 : 17, 18).*

Have these ceased?

Yes. Miracles were intended to excite attention, to certify the messenger as having special divine authority, and to illustrate his teaching. Inspiration was to secure infallibility to the doctrine as spoken and written. When the Church was established, and furnished with the complete word of God for its only rule of faith and practice, the Apostles' work was finished and their peculiar gifts were no longer needed. The Church and the world has long recognized the fact that inspiration, miracles and the impartation of the Holy Ghost have ceased. The Roman Catholic Church still claims these gifts, but only in modified forms; as the infallibility of certain utterances of the Pope, occasional minor miracles, and a grace of orders by the imposition of hands. Even these are not

* *What is Presbyterianism?* p. 53.

credited by many in that Church. The Catholic Apostolic Church (Irvingite) and the Latter-Day Saints claim to possess a restoration of the apostolic office and gifts, but the claim is not admitted by others.

Are there any successors of the Apostles?

No. None can be immediate witnesses of Christ's resurrection and doctrine, none have their peculiar gifts, and none can do their special work. In fact, none other were appointed by Christ or recognized by the early Church. False apostles and antichrists were foretold and rebuked (2 Cor. 11 : 13 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 3, 4). The Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal churches claim that besides the above work the Apostles labored as diocesan Bishops, having supreme authority over certain districts and over other Ministers ; that they alone had power of ordination ; that this office and work continue in the Church ; and that their Bishops are the successors of the Apostles. But the Apostles were not confined to districts ; they did not ordain successors. The term "Bishop" was applied under them and in the early Church to Pastors. Ordination was performed by the Presbytery, and the parity of the ministry was constantly insisted upon.*

Were there any other extraordinary officers in the Christian Church?

Prophets, who "differed from the Apostles in that their inspiration was occasional, and therefore their authority as teachers subordinate" (1 Cor. 14 : 1–40).† Sometimes they foretold future events.

Why have these ceased?

The Church has the completed word of God.

* See the Acts of the Apostles.

† *Hodge on Ephesians*, p. 149

Did Christ intend these to be temporary?

He made no provision for their continued work or recognition in the Church. After the apostolic age they ceased, and so have their qualifications, inspiration and miracles.

II. How many ordinary and perpetual officers are there?

"The ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church are Bishops or Pastors; the representatives of the people, usually styled Ruling Elders; and Deacons."

Were these designed to be perpetual?

Yes. Preaching, spiritual oversight and the care of the poor are their several functions, and correspond to permanent needs in the Church. Provision was made for the continuance of these officers by election and ordination. Qualifications were given, and directions for the performance of duties.*

What officers were in the synagogue?

The Ruler of the synagogue, and a bench of Elders who assisted him in the oversight of the people.†

Were these transferred to the Christian Church?

This system had long been recognized in the Church as of divine authority, and both Jews and Gentiles were familiar with it. The synagogues were the proper and most convenient places for the preaching of the gospel. Often the Elders of the synagogue and the mass of the people became Christian, and the synagogue became the church. The long-established government and the recognized officers were continued and sanctioned by the Apostles. Where there was no synagogue, or when it did not become christianized, the Apostles formed the

* See below, under Chs. IV., V., VI.

† *Primitive Church Officers*, pp. 11, 12; *Miller on Presbyterianism*. pp. 10, 11.

church after the same model, with Pastor, Elders and Deacons.*

CHAPTER IV.

OF BISHOPS OR PASTORS.

What is the first office in the Church?

"*The pastoral office is the first in the Church, both for dignity and usefulness,*" as shown by the names, authority, qualifications, duties and rewards connected with it in Scriptures.†

By what names is this officer called?

"*The person who fills this office hath, in Scripture, obtained different names expressive of his various duties.*" He is termed—

(1) "*Bishop,*" "*as he has oversight of the flock of Christ*" (Acts 20 : 28).

(2) "*Pastor,*" "*as he feeds them with spiritual food*" (1 Pet. 5 : 2; Jer. 3 : 15).

(3) "*Minister,*" "*as he serves Christ in his Church*" (1 Cor. 4 : 1).

(4) "*Presbyter or Elder,*" "*as it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ*" (1 Pet. 5 : 1; Tit. 1 : 5; 1 Tim. 5 : 1, 17, 19).

(5) "*Angel of the Church,*" "*as he is the messenger of God*" (Rev. 1 : 20; 2 : 1).

(6) "*Ambassador,*" "*as he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ*" (2 Cor. 5 : 20).

* See Acts of the Apostles † Epistles to Timothy.

(7) *"Steward of the mysteries of God," "as he dispenses the manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ"* (Luke 12 : 42; 1 Cor. 4 : 1, 2).

Is he properly a Bishop?

He is so called in Scripture. The qualifications are ascribed to him. The work of oversight and ordination are committed to him. No permanent superior officer is described.*

Are ministers officially equal?

The parity of the ministry is taught in Scripture. There is no higher office. All have the same qualifications, titles and work.

What churches hold a threefold ministry?

The Episcopal churches—Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, each having separate functions. The Bishop, having oversight and authority over the other Ministers and over the churches within a certain district, and the powers of confirmation and ordination; the Priest, being pastor of a local church, subject to his Bishop, and having direction over the Deacon; the Deacon, being the assistant of the Priest in parish work, and in preaching if he be licensed to do so. The Romish Church adds to these the Pope, as having supreme and infallible authority over the whole Church as the vicar of Christ and successor of Peter.

Is a Minister ever called a "Priest" in the Scriptures?

There were Priests under the ceremonial dispensation, as the types of Christ and his work. But since the only High Priest and Mediator Jesus Christ fulfilled these tpyes, the name "Priest" is nowhere given to a Minister

* *What is Presbyterianism?* pp. 36–62; *Primitive Church Offices*, pp. 29–67; *Miller on Presbyterianism*, pp. 13–21.

in the Christian Church, nor are the functions of sacrificial service ascribed to him.*

What are the peculiar duties of the Minister?

(1) Preaching the word; (2) administering the sacraments; (3) blessing the people; and (4) ordination.

What duties does he share with Ruling Elders?

Government in the particular church and in the various judicatories.†

What duties does he share with Deacons?

The care of the poor, distribution of the charities of the church, and the oversight of the temporalities of the congregation.

In all his duties, what is his relation to Christ and to the Church?

He is the Minister of Christ, accountable to him, subject only to him and to his brethren in the Lord. He is not a lord of God's heritage, but placed over the church for its edification (1 Cor. 3 : 5; 4 : 1–5; Acts 15 : 6–31; 1 Pet. 5 : 3).‡

Does his office depend upon his connection with a particular church?

A Minister may be ordained *sine titulo*, to do general missionary work. But generally he is ordained when, as a Probationer, he shall have preached so much to the satisfaction of a congregation that he shall be regularly called by them, and set over them by the Presbytery. § When, for any cause, the pastoral relation is dissolved by the order of Presbytery, his authority and duties in that congregation cease, but his office as a Minister continues. He may still preach, administer the sacraments, bless the people, perform the marriage service, take part

* See p. 72.
† *Form of Government*, ch. v.
‡ *Ibid.*, chs. xiv. and xv.
§ *Ibid.*, ch. xv.

in ordinations and sit in the church courts.* In the Presbyterian churches of Scotland only Pastors and Teachers of theology are permitted to vote in the church courts.

What is a Pastor?

He is a Minister regularly installed over one or more churches by the Presbytery.†

What is a Stated Supply?

A Licentiate or Minister who has a temporary charge of a church, sometimes engaged by the church for a few months, and sometimes year by year. This should never be done without the permission of Presbytery, which has the oversight of the churches and Ministers. It is sometimes permitted in feeble churches in hopes of uniting the churches, or that the Stated Supply may be called as Pastor, or in case of the prolonged sickness or absence of the pastor.‡ The Stated Supply, as such, has no authority in the church, nor a seat or vote in the Session.§ When the relation of a Stated Supply to a church is continued beyond the emergency, it is an irregularity, an evil, and is inconsistent with our polity.‖ The O. S. and N. S. Assemblies agree in the above. Since the reunion the General Assembly declared "that Stated Supplies should not preach in the pulpits of any Presbytery without its consent, and when the consent is refused the Presbytery to which such Minister serving as Stated Supply belongs, being notified, should recall him within its own bounds;" that the Stated Supply has not the right, power or prerogative in the church Session as a Pastor;‖ "that he has such rights and prerogatives as may

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 209. † *Form of Government*, ch. xv.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 148. § See pp. 130, 400.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 146.

be expressly conferred on him by the Presbytery, and no other." Presbyteries should insist on installations.*

What are Co-pastors?

Ministers associated as pastors over one or more churches, having equal authority.†

What is a Pastor emeritus?

When a Pastor has long served a church, but cannot continue his labors, he may receive this honorary title when the church so desires. The Presbytery releases him from the duties of his office and another pastor is called. A salary may or may not be given. He should not claim a seat in Session nor exercise jurisdiction in the church.

What is a Pastor at large?

A minister appointed by Presbytery to exercise pastoral supervision over the feeble and vacant churches and to moderate their meetings of Session. The Assembly has recommended their appointment.‡

What is a Pastor's Assistant?

He may be a Probationer or an ordained Minister chosen by the church or Pastor, with the approbation of Presbytery, to assist the Pastor, for a time or permanently, in the discharge of his duties. As he is to labor in the church, the congregation should be consulted in the choice of an Assistant, even if the Pastor alone becomes responsible for his maintenance. As the Pastor is to be assisted, he should be consulted in the selection, even if the congregation pays the whole salary of the Assistant. He has no seat in Session nor jurisdiction in the congregation. In his duties he acts in the name and under the direction of the Pastor. In Scotland he is called the Pastor's Helper.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 147, 148.

† *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. v. ‡ *Minutes, 1894*, p. 138.

What is a Minister without charge?

He is a Minister who has been released from his pastoral charge, and is not yet settled over another congregation.

What is a Minister "in transitu"?

He is a Minister who has been dismissed from one Presbytery, and has not yet been received by another Presbytery. During this transition he is "subject to the jurisdiction of the Presbytery which dismissed him (but shall not deliberate or vote, nor be counted in the basis of representation to the General Assembly) until he actually becomes a member of another Presbytery."*

What is a Pastor elect?

A Minister or Probationer whose call to a pastorate has been approved by Presbytery, and who has signified his acceptance thereof and his readiness for installation.†

What is an Evangelist?

He is a Minister regularly ordained, but not settled over a particular church. His work is "to preach the gospel, administer sealing ordinances and organize churches in frontier or destitute settlements."‡

The title is often given to Ministers without charge, who preach to the masses, and to those who hold revival services in churches or communities.

Laymen, with or without ecclesiastical authority, performing evangelistic work are also called Evangelists.

Local Evangelists are laymen licensed by Presbytery to labor within its bounds, according to Constitutional Rule No. 1. (See page 565.)

What is a Missionary?

Missionaries are ordained men, generally Evangelists,

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 110. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 146.
‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xv. See p. 386.

sent out by the Church to labor among the heathen. Home Missionaries are Ministers, Evangelists or Pastors in feeble churches or in destitute places, either within or beyond the bounds of Presbytery, commissioned by the Board of Home Missions.

What is a Chaplain?

He is a Minister appointed by the government, with the approbation of Presbytery, to labor in the army or navy or in prisons or asylums.* He is accountable to Presbytery for his doctrine and character. In 1890, The United Christian Commission was organized by seven Protestant denominations to promote the intellectual and moral welfare of the army and navy. It was approved by the G. Assembly, which agreed to appoint annually three members of the Commission.† Its efforts to increase the number of the Chaplains and secure needed buildings at army posts were commended.‡

What is an itinerant Missionary?

A Minister or Licentiate sent for a few months on preaching-tours in destitute parts of the country. Formerly the Synod or Assembly frequently designated the men, route, places to be visited and the time. Pastors were required to go on regular itinerating journeys.§

How else may a Minister be engaged?

Ministers are often called to take charge of the general work of the Church—as *Secretaries* of its various Boards, as *Professors* of its theological schools, as *Presidents and Teachers* of its colleges and academies, and as *Editors* of its publications. They are always subject to their several

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 210.
† *Minutes G. Assembly 1891*, p. 186.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1892*, p. 191; *1893*, p. 67; *1894*, pp. 125, 174.
§ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 326, 323, 346, 358.

Presbyteries, except so far as their official fidelity is concerned; for this, of course, they are responsible to the body which appointed them. In the discharge of their duties they should give great prominence to their character and influence as Ministers of Christ. This is insisted upon in the "Form of Government" adopted by the Southern Presbyterian Church.*

What is a retired Minister?

A Minister is said to be honorably retired when, because of sickness, old age or for any other reason, he ceases to be engaged in ministerial work. He need not demit his office.† He is still responsible to Presbytery and a member of it.‡ He is not a layman, and cannot be elected Elder or Deacon.§ He cannot be enrolled as a communicant of a particular church, nor vote at church meetings,‖ except on financial questions, when, if he be a pewholder, as such he may vote, provided the charter of the said church permits pewholders to vote.¶ In the General Assembly Minutes such are designated H. R.

CHAPTER V.

OF RULING ELDERS.

What are Ruling Elders?

"*Ruling Elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with Pastors or Ministers.*"

* *Book of Church Order*, ch. iv., sects. v., vi.

† See p. 215. ‡ See p. 210. § See pp. 57 and 66.

‖ See p. 133. ¶ See p. 38.

When was this office introduced into the Church?

It has been the permanent office in the Church under all dispensations, even under the Abrahamic. (See Gen. 24 : 2; 50 : 7; Ex. 3 : 16; 4 : 29, 30; 12 : 21; 18 : 12; Deut. 5 : 23; Ps. 107 : 32, etc.) Under the Mosaic ritual the Elders were the recognized representatives of the people. They were systematically arranged into courts having various jurisdictions, and the highest court of seventy Elders was a court of appeal (Ex. 18 : 21–25; Num. 11 : 16, 25; Ex. 24 : 1.)* These Elders and courts are frequently referred to in the after history. When the synagogues were established (the date of which is uncertain) these Elders were connected with the different synagogues, and were called the Rulers of the synagogue (Matt. 5 : 22; 26 : 3; Luke 7 : 3; Acts 4 : 8, 23; 6 : 12; 23 : 14; 24 : 1; 25 : 15). At first the converts to Christianity were made from Jews, and later from Gentiles who were accustomed to the polity of the synagogues, which were established in almost every city in the Roman empire. Often a whole synagogue became a Christian church, retaining its form of government. The other churches were formed in like manner (Acts 14 : 23; 20 : 17; 1 Tim. 5 : 1, 17, 19; Tit. 1 : 5; James 5 : 14; 1 Pet. 5 : 1, 5).†

Many of the Fathers speak of Elders as distinct from Ministers, ruling as representatives of the people.‡ The Waldensian and other ancient churches which were regarded by Rome as heretical, but which maintained pure doctrine, worship and polity, have always retained this

* *Miller on Ruling Elders*, pp. 29–34.

† *Primitive Church Offices*, pp. 1–28; *Miller on Presbyterianism*, pp. 9–13; *Miller on Ruling Elders*, pp. 48–72.

‡ *Miller on Ruling Elders*, pp. 72–106.

office. It is adopted by almost all the Reformed churches.*

"This office has been understood, by a great part of the Protestant Reformed churches, to be designated in the Holy Scriptures, by the title of governments; and of those who rule well, but do not labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Cor. 12 : 28; Rom. 12 : 7, 8; 1 Tim. 5 : 17). It is the continuation in the Christian Church of the office so well known in the Old Testament. "The whole congregation" and the "Elders of the congregation" are constantly interchanged as meaning the same, as in Lev. 4 : 13, 15. The Elders were the representatives of the people, and as such exercised the prerogative of ruling. This principle of ruling by representatives and the office of Elders were introduced into the Christian Church from the synagogue by the Apostles.†

The "Form of Government" of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland says: "As there were in the Jewish Church Elders of the people joined with the Priests and Levites in the government of the Church, so Christ, who hath instituted government and governors ecclesiastical in the Church, hath furnished some in his Church, besides the Ministers of the word, with gifts of government, and with commission to exercise the same when called thereunto, who are to join with the Minister in the government of the Church. Which officers Reformed churches commonly call Elders."*

Is this office distinct from that of the ministry?

The quotation above from the standard of the Church

* *Miller on Ruling Elders*, pp. 107–147; *Authorized Standards of the Free Church of Scotland*, p. 307.

† *Church Polity*, p. 262; *Miller on Presbyterianism*, p. 9; *Primitive Church Offices*, Essay I.; *Divine Right of Church Government*, p. 172.

of Scotland declares the office to be distinct. This is the doctrine of our own "Form of Government."* They have different qualifications, are chosen by different bodies. Elders are ordained by a Minister, and Ministers by the Presbytery.† Elders are subject to the Session, the Minister to the Presbytery.‡ Elders cannot take part in the ordination of Ministers, nor can they administer the sacraments.§ Elders, called to the ministry, must be reordained.† Ministers are not permitted to serve as Elders except in emergencies on missionary-ground.‖ In the Church of Scotland, Ministers are often chosen by Presbyteries to represent them in the General Assembly, but it is not on the supposition that Ministers and Elders are of the same office.

Wherein do they differ from Ministers?

Ministers are "*messengers of God*" and "*ambassadors of Christ.*" Elders are representatives of the people. They perform their work "*in conjunction with Pastors or Ministers.*" They have no power to preach or administer the sacraments,¶ nor take part in ordination.**

What are their duties?

"*To exercise government and discipline in conjunction with Pastors or Ministers*" in the different courts of the Church, and to assist the Pastor in the oversight, instruction and visitation of the people, "studying the peace, unity and purity of the Church."† If there be no Pastor, for the time being the government and discipline de-

* See chs. iii., iv. and v.

† *Form of Government*, chs. xiii., xiv. and xv.

‡ *Ibid.*, ch. xiii., sect. vii.; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 18.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 149, 151. ‖ *Ibid.*, pp. 527–529.

¶ *Directory of Worship*, ch. vii., sect. i., and ch. viii.

** *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 149.; *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. iv.

volve upon them, and under direction of Presbytery they must see that the pulpit is supplied from Sabbath to Sabbath; and if this be impracticable, they must themselves conduct the service, "select the portions of Scripture and of the other books to be read"—"works of such approved divines as the Presbytery within whose bounds they are, may recommend and they may be able to procure." * In 1894 the preparation of a Manual for Elders was recommended by the Assembly, and in 1897 it was published by the Board of Publication.†

By whom are they chosen?

"*They are the representatives of the people, chosen by them,*" "in the mode most approved and in use in that congregation." In 1822 the Assembly said that "it would be most desirable to have the communicants only as the electors of Ruling Elders, yet as it appears to be the custom in some of the churches in the Presbyterian connection to allow this privilege to others," the election by the whole congregation should not be considered void. In 1830 it decided that unbaptized persons could not vote for Elders. In 1855 the O. S. Assembly judged "it most consonant to our 'Form of Government' that communicants only should vote for Ruling Elders." In 1897 the Assembly declared "that only communicants in good standing are qualified voters at the election of Ruling Elders and Deacons.‡

Who may be chosen?

"In all cases the persons elected must be male members in full communion of the church in which they are to exercise their office." They must be in good standing. A communicant under discipline cannot be elected.

* See p. 551. † *Minutes of G. Assembly, 1894*, p. 76.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 531. See p. 306.

Nor can one who does not accept the teaching of the Church in regard to infant baptism.*

An unemployed Minister in the congregation is not a member of a particular church, and is not eligible.†

In what church may he exercise his office?

Only in the congregation in which he has been elected, and in those courts above the Session to which he is sent as delegate. An Elder without charge has no jurisdiction. Nor can he hold office in two different churches at the same time.†

Is election by the people necessary?

Persons nominated and ordained by a Minister are to be considered "as private church members only, unless they be duly elected and set apart as church officers hereafter."‡

Must they be ordained?

"The Minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer to the office of Ruling Elder."§ In 1868 the N. S. Assembly declared that an Elder elect cannot sit in the Session or exercise his office until he be ordained.‖ This ordination may be either by prayer, or by prayer with the laying on of hands by the Minister. It is left to the discretion of each church which method to adopt, but as the imposition of hands "is plainly in accordance with apostolic example, it is the opinion of the Assembly (in 1833) that it is proper and lawful."¶

To what court is he responsible?

To the Session, being a member of the particular church. When, however, the only Elder or Elders of

* *Minutes General Assembly 1882*, p. 98.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 527.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 525; *Form of Government*, ch. x., xi. and xii.

§ *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. iv.

‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 159. ¶ *Ibid.*, p. 534.

the church be accused, the Presbytery is the court to cite and try.* When an Elder has become incapable of serving the church to edification, the Session may take action with his concurrence, or by advice of Presbytery.† In 1869 the O. S. Assembly decided that the Presbytery has power to visit particular churches, to inquire into their state, and to order whatever pertains to their spiritual welfare, without being requested by the Session, even to declaring that an Elder shall cease to act.‡

Is the office perpetual?

"The offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon are both perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure." Nor can an Elder be divested of his office but by deposition. But he may, under certain circumstances, cease to be an acting Ruling Elder.§

How may an Elder cease to be an acting Elder?

(1) By death.

(2) When "by age or infirmity he become incapable of performing the duties of his office," with his consent or by advice of Presbytery the Session may relieve him.†

(3) "Though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, he may become unacceptable, in his official capacity, to a majority of the congregation;" with his concurrence or by advice of Presbytery the Session may take order, stating the reasons of their action.‖

(4) If guilty of heresy or immorality, he may be deposed after trial before Session.

(5) He may and should resign if he cannot acquiesce in the decisions of the superior courts.¶

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 151. See *Book of Discipline*, sect. 18.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. vii.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 538. See pp. 316, 317.

§ *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. vi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 536.

‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 214, 538. ¶ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

(6) By advice of a superior court he may resign to promote the peace of the church.* "The resignation should be to the Session; and it will take effect when accepted."†

(7) "His dismission by letter from a church terminates his official relation to that church." So the N. S. Assembly decided in 1867.‡ This is the teaching of "Form of Government," ch. xiii., sect. ii., and is implied by the order of the O. S. Assembly in 1856, which requires an election and installation in the church to which he is dismissed, before he can act as Elder there.§

(8) He may be removed by a superior court.‖

(9) By the expiration of his term of service, when he has been elected to exercise his functions for a limited time, according to section viii. of chapter xiii.‖

May an Elder without charge sit in church courts?

Not in Session. If elected on the term-eldership scheme, after his term has expired his advice may be sought by the Session (but he cannot vote), and he is "entitled to represent that particular church in the higher judicatories when appointed by the Session or Presbytery."¶

Does restoration to church privileges of an Elder who has been suspended from them, restore to office?

"The two things are distinct." The removal of suspension from the communion does not restore to office "without a special and express act of the Session for that purpose with the acquiescence of the Church." Yet the Assembly decided in 1893 that the removal of sus-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 537. † *Ibid.*, p. 538.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 540. § *Ibid.*, p. 535. ‖ See p. 317.
¶ *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. viii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 543. See p. 320.

pension from office only, restored to the active duties of Elder in that congregation without further action.*

If he has been dismissed to another church, and returns to the church in which he was formerly Elder, he must be re-elected and installed, as his dismission terminated his relation to that church. This is plain from the "Form of Government" and the usage of the Church.†

What are Elders in other Churches?

In the Episcopal Church there are properly no Elders, though the Priests are sometimes so called. The name "Priest" is discarded by the Reformed Episcopal Church, and "Presbyter" is adopted in its place.‡ The Methodists call their Ministers, Preachers or Elders. The Presiding Elders are Elders chosen by the Bishops to preside over a district for not more than four years, to take oversight of churches and Ministers, and be assistants to the Bishop.§ In the Reformed (Dutch) and in the Lutheran churches the Elders correspond to our Ruling Elders.‖

CHAPTER VI.

OF DEACONS.

What are Deacons?

"The Scriptures clearly point out Deacons as distinct officers in the church, whose business it is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 538. † *Ibid.*, p. 534.
‡ *Book of Common Prayer of the Reformed Episcopal Church.*
§ *Discipline* (1880), ¶ 164–173.
‖ *Formula of Government*, chap. iii., sect. vi.

may be raised for their use. To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church."

When was this office introduced into the Church?

There is no mention of Deacons under the Old-Testament dispensation. The contributions of money were under the care of the Levites and Priests (Ex. 38 : 21 ; Num. 1 : 50, 53 ; Ezra. 8 : 24–30, 33). Special provisions were made under the law for the relief of the poor by individual, instead of official, contributions and care (Ex. 23 : 11 ; Lev. 19 : 9, 10 ; 25 : 25–55). Rev. James M. Wilson, D. D., in a pamphlet on "The Deacon" (p. 23), says: "In the language of Dr. McLeod, 'There were several officers in the Jewish synagogue, and these were authorized to conduct the public worship, preserve order and manage the finances of the congregation' ('Ecc. Cat.,' Ques. 51). This latter officer was the Chazan or Deacon of the synagogue ('Prideaux's Connections,' part i., book vi.), and in the words of Prideaux, 'the Chazanim—that is, Overseers—who were also fixed Ministers and under the Rulers of the synagogue, had charge and oversight of all things in it, kept the sacred books of the law and the prophets and other Holy Scriptures, as also the books of their public liturgies, and all other utensils belonging to the synagogue.' The order of the synagogue was, as all Presbyterians hold, the model of that of the Church under the New-Testament dispensation. In the synagogue was an officer that attended to the poor, had oversight of the place of worship and managed the finances." We have in Acts 6 : 1–6 the history of the introduction of this office into the Christian Church, the occasion, necessity of the office, the qualifications and duties of Deacons, their election and ordination.

Was this office designed to be permanent?

It is evident from Acts 6 : 1–6 that the office was not introduced because of a temporary emergency. The work committed to Deacons is a permanent one, for the poor we shall have with us always (Matt. 26 : 11), the Church is enjoined to make provision for them (Gal. 2 : 10), and contributions always will be given for the relief of Christians and for the extension of the Church, as in the days of the Apostles. The qualifications—honesty, good report, being filled with the Holy Ghost and wisdom, being the husband of one wife, ruling his children and own house well (Acts 6 : 3; 1 Tim. 3 : 12)—are not those which indicate an extraordinary and temporary office. Deacons were recognized as regular officers of fully-organized churches (Phil. 1 : 1; Rom. 12 : 7 ("ministry," *διακονίαν*); 1 Pet. 4 : 11 (*εἴ τις διακονεῖ*). The office has always continued in the Church in some form, was recognized by all the Reformers, and is continued in all branches of the Church.

It is "perpetual," in the sense that "it cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of it but by deposition." But under certain circumstances (see page 68) a Deacon may cease to exercise his office and to be an acting Deacon.*

What are the duties of Deacons?

"*To take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use. To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church.*" This includes visitation of those in need, inquiring into their real wants, helping them to obtain work and comforting them. Being church officers, they should always unite with temporal relief

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. vi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 535.

spiritual consolation, instruction and prayer. In many churches it is the duty of the Deacons to take charge of the communion set, and to bring it, with clean table-linen, to the church on the communion Sabbath, and from the poor fund, or some other designated fund, to provide the bread and wine for the Lord's table. When needed they may distribute the elements at the communion.*

What funds are committed to their charge?

The poor fund, however this may be raised. The collection taken at the administration of the Lord's Supper is usually devoted to the poor fund, which is increased by other means. "Over charities collected for any other purpose than those specified (for the poor) their office gives them no control." The poor to be cared for are those outside of as well as in the church.†

"*The temporal affairs of the church*" would include all money raised for the support of the ordinances of the church, and for the erection and preservation of the buildings belonging to it. All this may properly be committed to the Deacons. The "First Book of Discipline of the Kirk of Scotland" says: "The Deacons should take up the whole rents of the Kirk, disposing of them to the ministry, the schools and poor within their bounds, according to the appointment of the Kirk." "Under the patrimony of the Kirk we comprehend all things given or to be given to the Kirk and service of God, as lands, buildings, possessions, annual rents, and all such-like wherewith the Kirk is doted, either by donations, foundations, mortifications, or any other lawful titles of kings, princes or any persons inferior to them, together with the continual oblations of the faithful." This patrimony should be distributed by the Deacons to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 153. † *Ibid.*, p. 152.

the Pastor, the poor, the sick and strangers, and to the upholding of other affairs of the Kirk. "We add hereunto the schools and schoolmasters." "To whom we join also Clerks of Assemblies, . . . syndics or procurators of the Kirk affairs, takers-up of psalms and such like other ordinary officers of the Kirk."* It is usual in our Church to place all these temporal affairs in the charge of Trustees, and the Deacons have charge only of the poor fund. When the Deacons have the care of the property of the church, they are under the same limitations, etc. in their management thereof as the Trustees are in other churches.† The Committee on the Temporalities of the Church, appointed in 1892, reported in 1897 an amendment to this chapter providing for the management of the temporalities by the deacons. It was rejected by the Presbyteries.‡

To whom are the other collections committed?

The Session of the church receive from the General Assembly and the other courts recommendations of various objects to be presented to the people for their benevolent contributions.§ The collections are sent by the Session to the Treasurers of the several Boards as the church may contribute to each. Sometimes monthly collections are received for all the Boards, and the sum-total is divided by the Session among the Boards according to the ratio recommended by the General Assembly.

Has the Session any direct control over the poor fund?

To the Deacons belongs the sole responsibility of its management and distribution. The Session "may advise the Deacons respecting the use of funds." So the

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 64.
† See pp. 38–41.
‡ *Minutes G. A., 1898*, p. 97.
§ See p. 111.

O. S. Assembly decided in 1857. The question does not seem to have come before the N. S. Church, or the Assembly since the reunion. But the language of the book seems plain that the poor fund is entirely in the hands of the Deacons.*

How do Deacons differ from Ministers?

They are laymen. They labor chiefly for a certain class in the congregation. They have no seat in the church courts.† They have no part in ordination, preaching the word, administering the sacraments, or participating in the government of the church.

How do they differ from Ruling Elders?

The Elders have the spiritual oversight of the whole church; the Deacons have the care of the temporal wants of a part, and sometimes the charge of the property and revenue of the congregation.

Did not the Deacons ordained by the Apostles preach?

Not as Deacons. The object of their appointment was that the Apostles and Ministers might be relieved from serving tables, and that they might give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6 : 2–4). The qualifications required are not aptness to teach, etc., but honest report, prudence, gravity, temperance, faith, consistency, being full of the Holy Ghost, and not greedy of lucre (Acts 6 : 3; 1 Tim. 3 : 8, 9, 10). Stephen "did great wonders and miracles among the people," and he did speak with wisdom and spirit, both in his daily intercourse with men and in his defence when accused of blasphemy before the Sanhedrim (Acts 7). It may be questioned whether his defence, speaking with wisdom and spirit, and disputations, were of the nature of preaching, the official and authoritative proc-

* See p. 70.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 153.

lamation of the gospel. But if so, there is no indication that he preached as a Deacon, for preaching is never elsewhere referred to the diaconate. Even in the Episcopal churches the Deacon is not permitted to preach by virtue of his office, but must receive a license to do so, from the Bishop after due examination. Stephen probably held two offices—that of Deacon and that of Evangelist, as did Philip, another of the seven (Acts 21 : 8).

Who may be chosen Deacons?

"In all cases the persons elected must be male members in full communion in the church in which they are to exercise their office." * A Minister, therefore, though without charge, not being a member of a particular church, cannot be elected Deacon. This was reaffirmed by the N. S. Assembly in 1865 and 1869; and the principle is stated (the application, however, is to the eligibility to the office of Ruling Elder) by the Assembly of 1874, and again in 1893, "because ministers are not members of any particular church nor amenable to its discipline." †

May a woman be elected?

"In all cases the persons elected must be male members." * Rev. Charles Hodge, D. D., says: "In addition to Deacons, we know that Deaconesses were in some instances appointed" (in the apostolic Church), "but we have no evidence that it was the universal practice." ‡ Phœbe is called by Paul "a servant of the Church" (*διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας*). Tryphœna, Tryphosa and the beloved Persis, "who labor in the Lord," are supposed by some to be Deaconesses in the same church (Rom. 16 : 1 and 12). In 1 Tim. 3 : 11 it is required that the wives

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. ii.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 528.
‡ *Church Polity*, p. 278.

(γυναῖκες) of the Deacons "must be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things;" and some suppose that they held official relations to the church as Deaconesses. In 1 Tim. 5 : 9 the expression, "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old," is understood by some as those poor women who should be assisted by the church, but others hold that it refers to those women who may be chosen Deaconesses, to have charge of the female part of the congregation. Such women officers are considered to have been specially necessary among the Gentile converts, whose women were held in greater seclusion than among the Jews.* Tabitha or Dorcas is also by some regarded as holding this office (Acts 9 : 36). Pliny wrote to Trajan of two (Ministræ) whom he had tortured. Some conclude they were Deaconesses In the early Church there were Deaconesses who had charge of the poor and sick of their own sex, but the office was abolished in the Latin Church in the eleventh century, and in the Greek Church in the twelfth century.†

There is no evidence that the Deaconesses were elected or ordained as officers in the apostolic Church. Many women ministered of their substance, as did those of Galilee unto Christ, and devoted time and labor to the poor, and were, with the wives of the Deacons, regarded as helpers, but without official position. "There is nothing in our Constitution, in the practice of the Church or in any present emergency to justify the creation of a new office." An amendment, providing for the election of Deaconesses was rejected in 1891, and another in 1893. The systematic training of women workers was recommended to Synods and Presbyteries.‡

* See *History of Apostolic Church*, p. 535.

† *American Cyclopœdia.* ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 532.

By whom are Deacons to be elected?

"Every congregation shall elect persons to the office of Ruling Elder, and to the office of Deacon, or either of them, in the mode most approved and in use in that congregation." * Those who vote for Elders may vote for Deacons.†

Must they be ordained and installed?

The same rules apply to them as to Ruling Elders as to ordination, installation, resignation, deposition, removal, dismissal, return, ceasing to act, effect of suspension and restoration.‡

May a person be at once Elder and Deacon?

The O. S. Assembly in 1840 declared that while it is desirable that these offices should be kept distinct, "yet in the opinion of this Assembly it is not inconsistent with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, nor with the precedent furnished in filling the office of Deacon in its first institution, that where a necessity exists the same individual should sustain both offices."§ The N. S. Assembly took no action on this question, but the wording of the "Form of Government" ch. xiii., sect. ii., seems to imply that persons may be elected to both offices or to either of them. In 1880 the Assembly was asked, "When a Deacon in any church is elected and installed a Ruling Elder in the same church, does he cease to exercise the functions of his office as a Deacon?" and answered, "Not necessarily."§

When there are no Deacons the Session usually, as a body, take the oversight of the poor or appoint one or more of the Elders to act as Deacons.

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. ii. † See p. 56.
‡ See pp. 57–60. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 152.

May a Deacon sit in the church courts?

He is neither a Minister nor a representative of the people, and has therefore no judicial power.*

To what court is he responsible?

He is a communicant of a particular church, and therefore he is responsible to the Session. The Deacons should seek the advice of the Session in regard to the discharge of their duties as Deacons.* Their records and accounts should be presented at least once a year to the Session for approval.† Yet it is discretionary with the Session to incorporate them in its minutes.‡ "The Second Book of Discipline of Scotland" says: "They ought to do according to the judgment and appointment of the Presbyteries or Elderships (of which the Deacons are not members), that the patrimony of the Kirk and poor be not converted to private men's uses nor wrongfully distributed."§ The Southern Presbyterian Church requires that "a complete account of collections and distributions, and a full record of proceedings, shall be kept by the Deacons, and submitted to the Session for examination and approval at least once a year."‖

May Deacons assist the Elders at the Lord's table?

The N. S. Assembly referred the matter to the discretion of the Sessions in 1867.¶ This was affirmed by the Assembly of the reunited Church.**

May a Deacon be elected for a term of years?

"The 'Form of Government' was amended in 1886, permitting the election of Deacons for a limited term in

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 152.
† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 71.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 679. § *Assembly's Digest*, p. 64.
‖ *Book of Church Order*, ch. iv., sect. iv., sub-sect. iv.
¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 153.
** See p. 63.

the exercise of their function, provided, as in the case of Elders, they be elected "for not less than three years," and "made to consist of three classes, one of which only shall be elected every year."*

What is the Board of Deacons?

The Deacons cannot act on individual responsibility, but must meet together and organize as a Board of Deacons. They should appoint a Moderator, a Clerk and a Treasurer, attend to their business in an orderly way, determine methods for searching out the poor, visiting the sick, obtaining work and relieving the distressed. They should consider the cases brought before them, and determine how to answer their applications. They should keep full records and accounts of money received and distributed, and at certain times present them to Session for approval. If the management of the temporal affairs is also committed to them, they should keep a separate account of the funds of the congregation.

Often the members of Session are expected to be present at the Deacons' meeting, to advise, but not to vote.† The Southern Presbyterian Church declares that one of the duties of the Session is "to examine the records of the proceedings of the Deacons."‡

What are Deacons in other churches?

In the Episcopal Church, Deacons are Ministers in the lowest order.§

In the Congregational Church they are spiritual officers. They have no care of the poor; they are elected by the church, but are not ordained; they, with the Pas-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 541.

† See above. *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. viii.; ch. x., sect. ix.; ch. xi., sect. vi.; chs. xix. and xx.

‡ *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. iii., sub-sect. v.

§ See p. 388.

tor, form the Prudential Committee, who take the oversight of the communicants, and report to the church whatever may require their action; they assist the Pastor in the sacrament.

In the Baptist Church, which is Congregational in polity, they are sometimes ordained with the laying on of hands.

In the Methodist Church the Deacons hold much the same office as in the Episcopal Church.

In the Reformed (Dutch) Church the Deacons do not differ from ours.

In the Lutheran Church they correspond to our Deacons, except that they assist the Pastor at the Lord's table, render all necessary service at public worship, see that the Pastor receives proper salary and administer the temporal affairs of the church.*

CHAPTER VII.

OF ORDINANCES IN A PARTICULAR CHURCH.

What is an ordinance?

That which is established by authority. In the Church the constitutional rules and the decisions of the highest court are never called "ordinances." They have merely church authority, and may be revised and changed by new rules and later decisions. But that which is ordained of God is an ordinance, binding on the conscience, and cannot be changed save by the order of God. All the laws of God, appointed services, times, ceremonies, types and officers are in Scripture called ordinances (Ex. 18 : 20;

* *Formula of Government*, ch. iii., sect. vi.

Num. 9 : 12; Ps. 99 : 7; Luke 1 : 6; Col. 2 : 14; Heb. 9 : 1, 10; Rom. 13 : 2). In the Christian Church, therefore, "*the ordinances (are) established by Christ the Head.*" They have his authority and are of perpetual obligation.

What ordinances has Christ established?

"*Prayer, singing praises, reading, expounding and preaching the word of God, administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, public solemn fasting and thanksgiving, catechising, making collections for the poor and other pious purposes, exercising discipline, and blessing the people.*"

For what purposes were these ordinances given?

"Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto." *

For whose benefit were they given?

For the Church as a body, and for the present and future members thereof (1 Cor. 14 : 4–40).

Wherein do the ordinances of the Old Testament differ from those of the New?

"Under the law, the covenant was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins and eternal salvation.

"Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was ex-

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxv., sect. iii.

hibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which, though fewer in number and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations." *

What connection have the ordinances of the two dispensations?

Those of the Old Testament were typical, ceremonial, ritualistic and complicated. In the New Testament these are retained in their substance, but the outward forms are changed. The complicated, ritualistic and ceremonial services of the temple become the more simple and direct worship of God. The veil is rent, we come with boldness to the mercy-seat (John 4 : 21–24; Heb. 4 : 16). The prophetical and typical ordinances, after the fulfillment of the promises and the accomplishment of all that was signified, take the forms of declarations, or "setting forth" what has been done (1 Cor. 11 : 26), of grateful reminders (1 Cor. 11 : 24) and of loving consecration and participation (John 6 : 53–63; 1 Cor. 10 : 16).

What is the difference between an ordinance and a sacrament?

An ordinance is the more general term, and includes whatever is ordained of God. As these ordinances were designed to communicate to us the benefits of redemption, they are often called the means of grace. "A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein by sen-

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. vii., sects. v. and vi.

sible signs Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers." There are but two sacraments in the New Testament—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.* These are also called "sealing ordinances." †

Who are responsible for the administration of the ordinances?

The Pastor and Session of the particular church. ‡

By whom is prayer to be offered in the church?

The Minister should himself offer the prayers. He may, when he deems it expedient or necessary, call upon one of the Elders of the church or any other fit person to conduct this part of the service. He is, however, always responsible for it. § At the more informal and social church-meetings, as at prayer-meetings and the monthly concert for prayer, "the brethren" (the male communicants) are to take part, under the general supervision of the Pastor. To this they are often urged by the General Assembly, as in the pastoral letters in 1817, 1832, and by the O. S. Assembly in 1849. || "Meetings of pious women by themselves for conversation and prayer, whenever they can conveniently be held, we entirely approve." "To teach and exhort, or to lead in prayer in public and promiscuous assemblies, is clearly forbidden to women in the holy oracles." ¶ In 1874 the Assembly to the overture, "Does the Assembly mean to enjoin that in the regular weekly prayer-meetings of the church no woman shall speak or lead in prayer?" answered, "Yes,

* *Shorter Catechism*, Qq. 88, 92, 93. † *Directory for Worship*, ch. x.

‡ *Form of Government*, chs. iv. and xxi.; *Directory for Worship*, chs. iii.–x. § *Ibid.*, ch. v., sect. iv.

|| *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 296, 302, 313.

¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 171.

except in emergencies, to be decided by the Pastor and Session;" and added, "The Assembly expresses no opinion as to the scriptural view of woman's right to speak and pray in the social prayer-meeting, but commits the whole subject to the discretion of the Pastors and Elders of the churches." *

May liturgies be used?

The "Directory for Worship," ch. v., gives direction for extemporary prayer. In 1867 the N. S. Assembly did not deem it necessary to give any deliverance on the use of liturgies, since "the usage and forms of the Presbyterian Church have been so uniform and acceptable for years past from their scriptural simplicity," and no change in these usages is likely to take place. In 1869 the O. S. Assembly declared that "it becomes the Church to withstand the tendency, so strongly manifested in many places, to a liturgical and ritualistic service." † In 1874 the Assembly declared "that the practice of responsive service in the public worship of the sanctuary is without warrant in the New Testament, and is unwise and impolitic, in view of its inevitable tendency to destroy uniformity in our mode of worship." "The Sessions of the churches are urged to preserve in act and spirit the simplicity indicated in the 'Directory for Worship.'" ‡ The Assembly refused to prepare a Book of Forms.§

What is the proper position in prayer?

In 1849 the O. S. Assembly recognized the fact that, according to scriptural example and the practice of the early Church, the proper posture in public prayer is standing, and in private prayer is kneeling—the pos-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 171.
† *Ibid.*, p. 840.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 833.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 95.

ture of sitting was regarded by the early Church as heathenish and irreverent—and therefore resolved, "That the practice (sitting in prayer) be considered grievously improper whenever the infirmities of the worshiper do not render it necessary, and that Ministers be required to reprove it with earnest and persevering admonition." This was reaffirmed in 1857. In 1854 the N. S. Assembly resolved that as the Bible does not enjoin precisely the tunes to be used, the posture to be adopted, or who shall join in the songs of the sanctuary, therefore no action be taken on uniformity in the forms of worship, posture in prayer and singing. In 1870 the Assembly said that action in relation to the posture in prayer and praise is inexpedient.*

Who should take part in singing praises?

This, as every other part of public worship, is under the direction of the Pastor. "The proportion of the time of public worship to be spent in singing is left to the prudence of every Minister." But "it is the duty of Christians to praise God by singing psalms or hymns publicly in the church, as also privately in the family." "The whole congregation should be furnished with books, and ought to join in this part of worship." "It is also proper that we cultivate some knowledge of the rules of music, that we may praise God in a becoming manner with our voices as well as with our hearts."†

Is it proper to have a choir?

The manner in which this important part of worship is to be conducted must be determined by the Session.‡ The custom in the Church of Scotland is to have a Pre-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 831.
† *Directory for Worship*, ch. iv.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 838.

centor, who occupies a place in front of or near the pulpit, and leads the congregation in singing. This was also the usage in the Presbyterian and some other churches in this country. It has passed away almost entirely until lately, when in some cases it has been re-established. It is more usual to have a trained choir. In 1867 the O. S. Assembly declared that those who lead in singing should be, as far as practicable, only "those who are in communion with the church and amenable to its jurisdiction;" that "the introduction of choirs or musical instruments can be justified only as they serve this end (to inspire and express devotion) and aid or accompany sacred song; and no display of artistic skill, no delicacy of vocal training, no measure of musical ability, compensates for the violation, or even neglect, of the proprieties of divine worship." It recommends that meetings for rehearsal be held on other days than the Sabbath. It reminds the Church "that the Scriptures nowhere recognize the service of song as to be performed by the few in behalf of the many."*

May musical instruments be used?

What has been said above of choirs applies equally to musical instruments. In 1845 the O. S. Assembly replied to an overture, that "whereas by the 'Form of Government' and 'Directory for Worship' the whole internal management of the church as to worship and order is committed to the Minister and Session," therefore no further order is necessary, but to each Session is left "the delicate and important matter of arranging and conducting the music as to them shall seem most for edification, recommending great caution, prudence and forbearance in regard to it."* Reaffirmed in 1884.†

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 781. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 172.

Is chanting allowable?

In the various books recommended by the Assemblies (O. S. and N. S.) to be used in the Church many chants are to be found. The committees appointed to prepare hymn-books have, in both branches of the Church, been instructed to make careful selections of the Psalms and of other portions of the Bible to be arranged for chanting.* Similar instructions were given and carried out in the preparation of "The Presbyterian Hymnal" of 1875, and "The Hymnal" of 1896.

What books of hymns and music may be used?

The "Directory for Worship," ch. iv., merely states that books should be furnished. As above stated, the whole matter is under the direction of the Session of each church. Yet they should not use the authority arbitrarily, adopting a new book "without the consent of the majority of said congregation" (1753).‡ The General Assemblies have often expressed their opinion of the desirability of having uniformity in the churches in this regard, but have never assumed authority, but have from time to time approved certain books, appointed committees to prepare them, published them by their committees or Boards, and earnestly recommended their use by the churches. At first the Assembly authorized the use of Rouse's version of the Book of Psalms, which is still used by the churches in Scotland and Ireland and in some of the branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country. Watts's "Imitation of the Psalms of David," with his three books of hymns, was afterward recommended. In 1830 "The Book of Psalms and Hymns," prepared by the Assembly, was approved and

* *New Digest*, p. 401; *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 652.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 837. ‡ *New Digest*, p. 108.

recommended. "The Church Psalmist" was adopted in 1843 by the N. S. Assembly. The O. S. Assembly in 1838 ordered a revision of the "Psalms and Hymns," which was made and authorized in 1843. In 1866 "The Hymnal" was approved. The reunited Church adopted the "Presbyterian Hymnal" in 1875. A Sabbath-school Hymnal was ordered in 1882. The Board of Publication was in 1889 recommended to prepare a New Hymnal, which in 1896 was published and recommended to the church for adoption by the Assemblies of 1896 and 1897.*

The introduction of Watts's version of the Psalms and of hymns at first met with much opposition. In 1755 the Synod determined that where Watts's book was adopted the Scotch version should be equally used in the public worship. In 1765 the Synod declared, "That they look on the inspired Psalms in Scripture to be proper matter to be sung in divine worship, according to their original design and the practice of Christian churches, yet will not forbid those to use the imitations of them whose judgment and inclination leads them to do so." In 1787 the Synod stated that while, for many years, they had allowed the use of Watts's book, "they were far from disapproving of Rouse's version, commonly called the Old Psalms," and that they "highly disapprove of public severe and unchristian censures being passed upon either of the systems of psalmody." The next year a Minister formally asked if the churches "have not fallen into a great and pernicious error in the public worship of God by disusing Rouse's versification of David's Psalms, and adopting in the room of it Watts's Imitation?" He was enjoined to be careful

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 832–837.

not to disturb the peace of the Church. In 1802 hymns were formally allowed.*

Who may read, expound and preach the word of God?

Pastors, Evangelists, Ministers regularly ordained and in good standing, and Licentiates. "It is expedient that no persons be introduced to preach in any of the churches under our care unless by the consent of the Pastor or church Session." † The above quotation recognized that the Pastor or Session is responsible for the instruction given to the church. The Pastor may invite Ministers and Licentiates to preach for him, whether they belong to the Presbyterian Church or any other whose ordination is recognized by our Church.

Under this same responsibility Pastors sometimes permit Candidates who are somewhat advanced in their studies, but not yet licensed by Presbytery, to try their gifts, in more or less formal expositions and preaching of the word, in their own churches and under their supervision.

In vacant churches the Elders or Deacons may, when a Minister cannot be procured, preside at the public worship, select the portions of Scriptures and of other books to be read, such works of approved divines recommended by Presbytery.‡ The O. S. Assembly in 1856 and 1857 recognized the right of Elders in the absence of the Pastor "to explain the Scriptures, and to endeavor to enforce the truth upon the conscience by suitable exhortations." §

Preaching without a license and lay preaching are regarded by the Assembly as irregular and improper. If men show a calling to the work, they should devote them-

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 775–777.

† *Form of Government*, chs. iv., xiv., xv.; *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. vi.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xxi.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 587.

selves to study, and when prepared should be regularly licensed.*

Women, while encouraged to hold meetings for women, are not to exhort or preach or lead in prayer in promiscuous assemblies, as this "is clearly forbidden in the holy oracles." † This was regarded in 1872 as a sufficient reply to the overture asking "for such rules as shall forbid the licensing and ordaining of women to the gospel ministry and the teaching and preaching of women in our pulpits," etc. In 1878 the Assembly decided that "the passages of Scripture referred to in the action of the Presbytery (1 Cor. 14 : 33–37 and 1 Tim. 2 : 11–13) do prohibit the fulfilling by women of the offices of Preachers in the regular assemblies of the Church." This was, in 1896, reaffirmed.‡ Their right to take part in social prayer-meetings is committed to the Sessions.† (See page 325.)

May Ministers read their sermons?

In 1761 Preachers were enjoined to forbear reading their sermons "if they can conveniently." The O. S. Assembly in 1841 and 1849 exhorted the younger Ministers "to adopt a different method (from reading), as more scriptural and effective, and more generally acceptable to God's people."§ "This method of preaching requires much study, meditation and prayer. Ministers ought in general to prepare their sermons with care, and not indulge themselves in loose, extemporary harangues, nor to serve God with that which costs them naught," etc. ‖

What is expository preaching?

The explaining and applying larger or smaller pas-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 543.
† *Ibid.*, p. 171.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 544.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 844.
‖ *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. iii.

sages of the word of God. This may be done in the reading of the Scriptures, or in more formal lectures or courses of sermons. "It is proper also that large portions of Scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved, for the instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the Sacred Oracles." This method of preaching was specially commended to Ministers in 1799.*

What is a sacrament?

"A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers." †

How many sacraments are there?

Under the Old Testament there were only two—Circumcision and the Passover (Gen. 17:10; Ex. 12:). "Under the New Testament Christ has instituted in his Church only two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper." ‡ This is the doctrine of all the Reformed churches. The Romish Church holds that there are seven sacraments—Baptism, Lord's Supper, Matrimony, Orders, Penance, Confirmation and Extreme Unction.

What is baptism?

"Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's." § It is the initiatory rite of the Christian Church, as cir-

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. ii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 844.
† *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 92.
‡ *Larger Catechism*, Q. 164; Matt. 28 : 19 ; 26 : 26, 27.
§ *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 94.

cumcision was of the Jewish Church. They have the same signification and use. Baptism in the New-Testament dispensation has taken the place of circumcision. "The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were for substance the same with those of the New."* (Col. 2 : 11, 12.) Circumcision is forbidden (Gal. 5 : 2), and baptism is enjoined (Acts 2 : 38).

Who may administer baptism?

In the Romish Church it is usually administered by the Priest, but in emergencies any man, or even a woman, may perform the service. In the Episcopal Church, Deacons may baptize in the absence of the Priest or under his direction. In other Reformed churches, as in our own, baptism is "not to be administered in any case by any private person, but by a Minister of Christ, called to be steward of the mysteries of God."† A Licentiate, not being a Minister, cannot baptize, nor can a Ruling Elder.‡ For the same reason a person deposed from the ministry cannot administer this sacrament; if he attempt it, the service is not valid.§ If a Minister be suspended, he has no right to exercise any of the functions of a Minister. If the suspended Minister performs the rite after he has united with some other Church, and is held there as in good standing, his administrations are to be regarded as those of other denominations.§ The service by an impostor is lay baptism, and therefore invalid.‖ If a Minister be immoral or unworthy of his office, but has not yet been disciplined, his baptisms are to be re-

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxvii., sect. v.
† *Directory for Worship*, ch. viii., sect. i.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 103, 845. § *Ibid.*, p. 105.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

garded as valid; where there have been great irregularities in the service, the Session should inquire into each case, and refer it to Presbytery for final decision.*

Is the efficacy of baptism affected by the personal character of the administrator?

"The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them." †

Is the baptism of other churches to be recognized?

"It is also a principle, that as long as any denomination of Christians is acknowledged by us as a Church of Christ, we ought to hold the ordinances dispensed by it as valid, notwithstanding the unworthiness of particular Ministers." *

Unitarian baptism was pronounced invalid by the Assembly of 1814. "It is the deliberate and unanimous opinion of this Assembly that those who renounce the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, and deny that Jesus Christ is the same in substance, equal in power and glory with the Father, cannot be recognized as Ministers of the gospel, and that their administrations are invalid." *

The O. S. Assembly decided in 1864 that baptism by the Campbellites or Disciples is invalid.‡

The O. S. Assembly in 1845 declared that the Romish Church is not a Church of Christ, nor its Priests his Ministers, and therefore its baptism is invalid. In cases

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 104.

† *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 91; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 104.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 789.

of doubt the Session must decide if the applicant must be baptized.* In 1875 our Assembly answered to the question, "Should a convert from Romanism be again baptized?" that "the decision of the question be left to the judgment of each church Session, guided by the principles governing the subject of baptism as laid down in the standards of our Church." In 1879 it was resolved, "That this Assembly, in full accordance with the words of our 'Confession of Faith' respecting the Church of Rome and its so-called spiritual head, do now reaffirm the deliverance upon this subject of the Assembly of 1835, as applying to that Roman hierarchy, headed by the Pope, falsely claiming to be the Church, which, opposed absolutely and irreconcilably to the doctrines of Holy Scripture, is corrupting and degrading a large part of Christ's Church over which it has usurped supreme control."* That deliverance in 1835 declared the papacy to be apostate from Christ and no true Church.† The early Reformed churches recognized Romanist baptism.‡

Who may be baptized?

"Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him, but infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptized. § "Not only those that do actually profess faith in obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents, are to be baptized." ||

Suspended members cannot present their children.

Christian masters and mistresses, who have the right

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 105–107.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 560.

‡ *Pardovan Collections*, p. 130. § *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 95.

|| *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxviii., sect. iv.

to claim baptism for their own children, should also dedicate the children of their servants in that ordinance, "when they have no scruple of conscience to the contrary."

Christian masters should present the infants of their slaves for baptism, "provided they are in a situation to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Christian slaves, having children "at the entire direction of unchristian masters, and not having it in their power to instruct them in religion, are bound to have them baptized."

Orphan children of heathen parents committed to the care of our missions are entitled to the benefits of baptism, when they are "so committed to the missions or other Christian tuition as to secure effectually their entire religious education," and "have not attained to years of discretion." So the O. S. Assembly determined in 1843.

Ministers should carefully examine persons applying to have their children baptized, that they are of a regular life and have suitable acquaintance with the principles of Christianity, that the seal be not set to a blank, and that such be not admitted to the Church who are manifestly unfit.*

May baptized parents, not communicants, obtain baptism for their children?

In the constitution of the Church the term "member of the visible Church," when unqualified, means members in full and regular standing—that is, communicants. Others are called "baptized members," "suspended members," "absent members," etc. Baptism is an act of faith;

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 108, 846, 848.

a profession of faith is therefore necessary. The Assembly was asked to give some precise direction and definition of the credible profession of Christianity required, but replied that it was unnecessary to deliver rules more explicit than those in the constitution. Cases of difficulty or doubt must be determined separately by the proper judicatories.*

At what age may infants be baptized?

"Baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed."† The precise time when infancy ceases is not determined by the word of God nor the standards of the Church. Sessions and Ministers may determine when a child is too old to be baptized on the faith of the parents.‡

May a person be baptized on a general profession of faith?

The N. S. Assembly in 1860 decided that a profession of faith in Christ and of obedience to him is all that is required of those who apply for baptism. "Hence cases may occur in which, as in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, it may be proper to baptize a person who does not expect immediately to connect himself with any particular church;" but in ordinary cases baptism should "constitute his initiation into the visible Church and into some particular branch of it."§

The O. S. Assembly in 1864 was asked if a member of the Friends' Society, determined to continue his connection therewith, may be baptized on the profession that "Jesus is the Son of God," and that he holds the essential doctrines of the Christian religion. The answer given was a reference to the "Larger" and "Shorter

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 845.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. viii., sect. i.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 845.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 861.

Catechisms:" "Q. To whom is baptism to be administered?"*

What are god-parents?

In the Episcopal Church the infant is presented for baptism by persons called god-parents and sponsors, who make the vows for the child, and, in its name, renounce the devil, world and flesh, adopt all the articles of the Christian faith, and promise obediently to keep God's holy will and commandments. A male child must have two godfathers and one godmother; and a female child one godfather and two godmothers. "The parents shall be admitted as sponsors if it be desired."† All children are baptized if the Priest be satisfied with the god-parents. In the Reformed Episcopal Church "infants must be presented by their parents, when practicable, and one at least of the persons presenting must be a communicant of this or of some other evangelical Church." The vows are made by the parents, that they have faith, and that they will bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.‡ This is true also of the Methodist Episcopal Church.§ Sponsors were permitted, in certain cases, in the Church of Scotland,‖ and are now in the Free Church.¶

Who may present children for baptism in other churches?

In the Congregational Church the custom is as in our Church. Formerly the "half-way covenant" was recognized; that is, parents who have been baptized, but who do not profess personal faith, were permitted to present their children for baptism on a declaration of their

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 859. † *The Book of Common Prayer.*
‡ *Book of Common Prayer of the Reformed Episcopal Church.*
§ *Discipline* (1880), ¶ 491. ‖ *Pardovan Collections*, p. 124.
¶ *Directory for Worship* (Free Church).

conviction of the truth of Christianity, and of their desire that their children be brought up under its influence, and on their engagement to instruct them and set before them a good example. This, however, has generally been discarded.

In the Baptist churches baptism is administered only to adults on the profession of their own faith and vows. The form is by immersion. No other baptism is recognized by them. In this country the Baptist churches hold to close communion; that is, they do not receive persons of other churches to their communion, and often forbid their members communing in other churches.

Does excommunication of a church member vitiate his baptism? and on his restoration should he be rebaptized?

The Assembly of 1881 answered both questions in the negative.*

How is baptism to be administered?

"Washing with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."† "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person."‡ "He is to baptize the child with water, by pouring or sprinkling it on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony; and the whole shall be concluded with prayer."§ In 1834 the Assembly was asked, "Is it expedient, in the present state of the Church, for a Presbyterian Minister to baptize by immersion in any case?" and replied, that it saw no cause for adding anything to the doctrine of the Confession on this subject.‖

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 861. † *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 94.
‡ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxviii., sect. iii.
§ *Directory for Worship*, ch. viii., sect. v.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 107.

Where may baptism be administered?

"It is usually to be administered in the church, in the presence of the congregation; and it is convenient that it be performed immediately after sermon."* (The more general custom now is to have the baptism before the sermon.) "Although it is proper that baptism be administered in the presence of the congregation, yet there may be cases when it will be expedient to administer this ordinance in private houses; of which the Minister is to be the judge."†

What is the Lord's Supper?

"The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."‡ It was substituted by Christ for the passover of the Old-Testament Church (Matt. 26 : 17–30).

Who may administer the Lord's Supper?

"Neither of which (baptism nor the Lord's Supper) may be dispensed by any but by a Minister of the word lawfully ordained."§

Who may be admitted to the Lord's Supper?

Communicants in good and regular standing. But the ignorant, the profane, the scandalous, and those who secretly indulge in any known sin, are to be warned not to come to the Lord's table.‖ Persons under charges

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. viii., sect. ii. † *Ibid.*, sect. v.

‡ *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 96.

§ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxvii., sect. iv. See p. 83.

‖ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxix., sect. viii.; *Larger Catechism*, Q. 173; *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix., sect. iv.

may be prevented, by the order of Session, from communing until the charges can be examined; "*provided*, that in all cases a speedy investigation or trial shall be had."* Communicants may also be advised by the Session not to partake whenever it is deemed expedient for their edification or that of the church that such advice be given. The Session are to receive into the membership of the church those professing faith in Christ and obedience to him, and those presenting regular certificates of dismission from other churches.† "The years of discretion in young Christians cannot be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the eldership. The officers of the church are the judges of the qualifications of those to be admitted to sealing ordinances, and of the time when it is proper to admit young Christians to them."‡

It is customary to invite all Christians present to unite in the service who are in good and regular standing in other evangelical churches. But "it is not in accordance with the spirit and usage of the Presbyterian Church to extend such invitations" to persons who are not members of any evangelical Church.§ "The language of the book ("Directory for Worship," ch. viii., sect. iv.) relied upon by some to authorize indiscriminate communion is not correctly interpreted by them. Although in describing the persons there invited to the Lord's table church-membership is not expressed, it is clearly implied."§

What are tokens?

Tokens are pieces of metal, bone or cardboard, some-

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 32.

† *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. vi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 168.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. ii. See p. 139.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 851.

times with a text of Scripture written thereon, which were formerly in this country, and still are in Scotland and Ireland, given by the Session to each communicant before the administration of the Lord's Supper, to indicate the approval by the Session of their presence at the table.

What kind of wine may be used?

In answer to several overtures on communion wine, the Assembly answered, "that the control of this matter be left to the Sessions of the several churches, with the earnest recommendation that the purest wine attainable be used." In 1881 the Assembly "recognized the right of each church Session to determine what is bread and what is wine." In 1895 it decided that "unfermented fruit of the vine fulfils every condition in the celebration of the sacrament." The churches were urged not to introduce individual cups. In 1896 the number of cups to be used was left to the Session.*

Where may the Lord's Supper be administered?

In the church, on the Sabbath, after due notice and after some preparatory service.†

"It was moved that the restriction laid by the last General Assembly on our Missionaries, which confines them to adminster the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in such places only where there are church officers regularly appointed, be repealed, and it is hereby repealed accordingly" (1798).

As a general principle, a Minister may not administer the communion within the bounds of a congregation with which he is not connected, without the consent of the Minister and Session; yet there may be exceptions under peculiar circumstances.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 853.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix., sect. iii.

The O. S. Assembly in 1863, while reasserting the doctrine of the "Confession of Faith," ch. xxix., sect. iv., that the "receiving of this sacrament by a Priest or any other alone" is "contrary to the nature of this sacrament and to the institution of Christ," stated that in cases of sickness or approaching death, the Pastor, with an Elder, may administer the sacrament to the sick and other communicants, having given proper instruction concerning the ordinance. A record of the fact must be entered on the minutes of the Session.*

How frequently should the sacrament be administered?

"It is to be celebrated frequently, but how often may be determined by the Minister and eldership of each congregation, as they may judge most for edification."†

Should days for fasting and thanksgiving be observed?

"It has been customary, in some parts of our church, to observe a fast before the Lord's Supper." "There is no day, under the gospel, commanded to be kept holy, except the Lord's Day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Nevertheless, to observe days of fasting and thanksgiving, as the extraordinary dispensations of Divine Providence may direct, we judge both scriptural and rational."‡

How should the Sabbath be observed?

"All worldly business should be so ordered, and seasonably laid aside, as that we may not be hindered thereby from sanctifying the Sabbath as the Holy Scriptures require." "The whole day should be kept holy to the Lord, ... abstaining from those recreations which

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 850.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix., sect. i.

‡ *Ibid.*, ch. ix., sect. vi.; ch. xv., sects. i. and ii.

may be lawful on other days; and as much as possible from worldly thoughts and conversations."*

The General Assembly has made many deliverances on the observance of the Sabbath as essential to the prosperity of the State and of the Church. It has insisted upon its divine origin, and the duty of all men to sanctify it according to God's law. It has set forth the blessings involved and the right of all to be secured in the enjoyment of its privileges. It has noticed the increasing desecration of the Sabbath, and has often urged the lower judicatories, Pastors, Elders, Sabbath-school officers and heads of families to see that instruction and warnings be given from the Scriptures in regard to its proper observance. Important Pastoral letters were sent to the churches in 1814 and in 1867.† Petitions were sent to Congress in 1812, 1814 and 1884, protesting against all unnecessary work on the Sabbath in the post-offices and in the army and navy; and Sessions have been urged "to exercise discipline on their respective members whenever guilty of violating the sanctity of the Sabbath."‡

The special forms of Sabbath desecration which have been denounced, are self-indulgence, pleasure-seeking, neglect of public worship, traveling, excursions, concerts, opening of art-galleries and other places of recreation and amusement, owning, selling or reading Sunday papers; decoration of graves;§ and unnecessary drilling, parades, work, and secular study in the Army and Navy. Efforts to secure a law against Sabbath work

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. i., sects. i. and ii.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 322, 759.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 812–816.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 821.

in the mail and military service and inter-State commerce have been approved.* Our people are counseled not to be connected with companies which desecrate the Sabbath.† Pastors are urged to preach on the last Sabbath in October on the obligation to keep the Sabbath holy.‡ In 1892 a memorial was sent to the President and to Congress against the opening of the Columbian Exposition on the Sabbath days and the sale of liquor on the grounds. The Assembly joined with other churches in urging Christians not to patronize the exposition by presence or exhibits should it be opened on the Sabbath. The proposed Parliament of Religion was disapproved.§ The committee on the Presbyterian exhibit was ordered to remove our exhibit if the Fair should be opened on the Sabbath. The boxes remained closed, but an historical pamphlet was distributed.

Co-operation with other denominations was invited as early as 1838.‖ The Southern Assembly urged this in 1882, to bring the Sabbath question before the civil authorities of all the States and the national Congress.¶ In 1888 a committee of seven was appointed, which, with representatives of other churches, organized the "American Sabbath Union." This was approved the next year, and the committee was continued to report annually.**

Who may appoint other days?

"It must be left to the judgment and discretion of every Christian and family to determine when it is proper to observe a private fast or thanksgiving, and to the church Session to determine for particular congregations, and to Presbyteries and Synods to determine for larger districts. When it is deemed expedient that a fast or thanksgiving

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 806.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 812–816.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 820.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 818.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 811.
¶ *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 86.
** *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 817.

should be general, the call of it must be judged of by the Synod or General Assembly. And if at any time the civil power should think it proper to appoint a fast or thanksgiving, it is the duty of the Ministers and people of our communion, as we live under a Christian government, to pay all due respect to the same." *

Days of fasting were appointed by the Synod in 1756 on the occasion of the French war, on the war with Spain in 1762, on account of the troubles with England in 1777–80, by the Assembly before and during the second war with England in 1808–14, by the O. S. and N. S. Assemblies on the outbreak of the civil war in 1861.

Days of prayer have been appointed by the Church for the observance of the Sabbath, the conversion of the world, etc.

The World's Week of Prayer, the first week in January, for the conversion of the world, has been appointed annually since 1859, until "the custom has come to have almost the force of law." † In 1880 there was some dissatisfaction manifested in the choice made by the committee of the Evangelical Alliance of subjects for the Week of Prayer, and a special committee was appointed to propose subjects to be recommended by the Assembly. This was done.‡ The next year the Assembly determined to follow the programme annually set forth by the Evangelical Alliance, and requested the Alliance that "in making out their programme for the Week of Prayer they would recognize as the supreme object of prayer the influence of the Holy Spirit in the particular objects proposed for each day." ‡ In 1893 a general return was urged to the

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. xv.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 872. ‡ *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 580.

original idea of the Week of Prayer. In 1891 the churches were enjoined to observe the monthly concert of prayer. The last Thursday in January is for prayer for schools and colleges,* and the Sabbath preceding or succeeding is Education Day.† The Second Sabbath in June is Children's Day,* and the last Sabbath in September is the Sabbath-school Rallying Day.‡ The first Sabbath in October is in behalf of the Board of Education.§ The last Sabbath in October is for the consideration of the observance of the Lord's Day.‖ The first Sabbath in November is for Foreign Missions,¶ and the third is Temperance Sabbath.** The Concert for Prayer in November for the Y. M. C. Association is commended.¶

Is marriage a sacrament?

"Marriage is not a sacrament, nor peculiar to the Church of Christ. It is proper that every commonwealth, for the good of society, make laws to regulate marriage which all citizens are bound to obey." ††

Who may perform the service?

"It should be solemnized by a lawful Minister." ‡‡ "While our 'Form of Government' does not recognize Licentiates as Ministers of the gospel, yet this Assembly do not consider them as violating any rules of the Church by solemnizing marriage in those States where the civil laws expressly authorize them to do it." §§ Marriage by civil officers, or otherwise according to the laws of the commonwealth, while not approved by our Church, is nevertheless to be recognized; as the marriage before a magistrate or among the Society of

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 874.
† *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 89.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1897*, p. 73.
§ *Ibid.*, *1888*, pp. 52, 137.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 820.
¶ *Ibid.*, *1886*, p. 95.
** *Ibid.*, *1898*, p. 402.
†† *Directory for Worship*, ch. xii., sect. i.
‡‡ *Ibid.*, sect. ii.
§§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 864.

Friends, where there is only a formal public announcement of intention and signing of a certificate. Ministers should be careful to inform themselves of the laws of the State in regard to marriage and license, and to observe them. In some States marriage is unlawful if performed by a Minister who is not a resident of the State. Special care should be taken in regard to minors desiring to be married.

Who may be married?

"Christians ought to marry in the Lord."* "It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent, yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord." "Such as profess the true Reformed religion should not marry with infidels, papists or other idolaters; neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life or maintain damnable heresies."†

"The parties ought to be of such years of discretion as to be capable of making their own choice; and if they be under age, or live with their parents, the consent of the parents, or others under whose care they are, ought to be previously obtained, and well certified to the Minister before he proceeds to solemnize the marriage. Parents ought not to compel their children to marry contrary to their inclinations, nor deny their consent without just and important reasons."‡

In 1850 the O. S. Assembly was asked by the Presbytery of Ningpo in regard to marriages of professed Christians with heathen. The overtures were referred

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 864.

† *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiv., sect. iii.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xii., sects. iv. and v.

back to the Presbytery, but the committee recommended an answer which does not seem to have been adopted by the Assembly—that it is not to be regarded, in the circumstances, "as sinful universally and necessarily for a Christian to marry a heathen," nor as rendering him liable to discipline, except in circumstances of which the missionaries must be the best judges.*

Who are forbidden to marry?

"Marriage is to be between one man and one woman only; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time."†

The Assembly in 1879 recorded its grateful acknowledgment to God that "by a recent decision of the Supreme Court of the United States the sin of polygamy has been declared to be a criminal offence against the Constitution and the laws of our country, and that under it prosecution and conviction have followed," and appealed "to the patriotic Christian men and women of our land to use their united influence in support of that public sentiment, now formulated into legal enactment, which has exposed the pretence of this monstrous practice to be a religious observance, and which justly holds it to companionship with other vices which are the contempt and abhorrence of mankind."‡ In 1881 the Assembly repeated its testimony against this enormous wickedness, and added: "1. We therefore, as an Assembly, solemnly protest before God and before men against this heinous and abominable crime as a foul blot on the face of our country, for the existence of which God will hold the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 96.

† *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiv., sect. i.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 93.

nation to account, and for which he will surely call it into judgment except the evil be speedily abated." 2. "We rejoice in the determination of the President of the United States, as expressed in his Inaugural Address, to deal vigorously with this iniquity; and we assure him of our sympathy and support in all lawful and just efforts for its extinction, praying him not to withhold his hand." 3. "We reiterate our hearty approval of the stand taken by Governor Murray of Utah and his counselors, and by the United States courts of the Territory, in hostility to polygamous marriages." 4. "We memorialize the National Legislature to enact whatever laws may seem most wise and most efficient for the utter obliteration of this vice, whether as an organized system or as an individual practice." 5. "And we urge our own members, without respect to party lines, zealously to exert their influence, in every lawful method, for the enactment of an amendment to the National Constitution that shall for ever prohibit the existence of polygamy in the nation." This action was ordered to be sent to the President and Congress, "as conveying the unanimous sentiment of the ministry and membership of the Presbyterian Church in the United States."*

A man whose wife is living may not marry, even though for ten years she refuses to follow him to this country and to recognize him as her husband. If, however, he can clearly prove to the Session that he has scriptural grounds for divorce, and has been unjustly refused by the civil courts, he may marry and may be admitted to church privileges. "But in such case it is necessary that the most authentic evidence be required and great caution be used, both that the proceedings of

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 94.

the Church may not be inconsistent with the civil law, and that a door be not opened to laxness on this important subject of morals."*

A man uncertain (or without satisfactory proof) of the first wife's death may not marry again. A Minister having thus married may not officiate as a Minister until he obtain satisfactory proof of his wife's death.†

In 1875 the Assembly was asked what should be done with a heathen convert who has two wives, and answered that bigamy "cannot be perpetuated by one who has become a follower of Christ, neither can it be justified by his Church. Converts from heathenism should be treated very tenderly in this most painful situation, and yet they should be dealt with in all fidelity; and when a converted man is called on to separate from all but his first and only wife, he should be enjoined to make suitable provision for her support that is put away, and for her children, if she have any, to the full extent of his ability."‡

Divorced persons may not marry unless the divorce has been obtained on scriptural grounds, which our "Confession of Faith" (ch. xxiv., sect. vi.) says to be "nothing but adultery or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate." So the N. S. Assembly has determined in the case of two Ministers, ratifying the action of Presbytery in deposing and excommunicating them.§

Drunkenness, abuse, neglect, incompatibility of disposition, etc. are not sufficient cause for divorce. Nor is it sufficient that scriptural grounds are known to exist: they must be alleged and proved as the reasons

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 683. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 93.
‡ *Minutes G. A., 1875*, p. 507. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 98.

on account of which the divorce is granted.* To the question, "Whether on full proof of adultery by one party the Presbytery has a right to declare the marriage so far void as that the innocent party may marry again without being liable to church censure?" the Synod in 1785 replied in the affirmative, but only by a small majority.† The "Confession of Faith" (ch. xxiv., sect. v.) says: "In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another as if the offending party were dead." It would seem, therefore, that the guilty party could not marry again. This is the opinion of very many, and in some of our States it has been so enacted. Others assert that divorce so dissolves the marriage that both parties are free to marry.

Persons may not marry who are "within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity prohibited in the word of God."‡ "Nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own."§ The Synod or Assembly has judicially decided that the following marriages are unlawful, and render the parties liable to discipline:

1. Marriage with a brother's widow. But in a case where the marriage had been contracted above fifteen years the Assembly deemed it inexpedient to express any opinion, but referred the case to the Session, "to act ac-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 98. † *Ibid.*, p. 97.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xii., sect. iii.

§ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiv., sect. iv. See p. 105.

cording to their own best light and the circumstances in which they find themselves placed."

2. Marriage with a wife's brother's daughter. This is not, in express terms, forbidden by the Levitical law, "yet as it is contrary to the custom of Protestant nations in general, and an evidence of great untenderness, and so opposite to such precepts of the gospel as require Christians to avoid things of ill report and all appearance of evil, and what is offensive to the Church," the persons should be rebuked by the Session, and others warned against such offensive conduct. If they submit to the rebuke and are in other respects regular professors, they are not to be debarred from church privileges.

3. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister's daughter. Such a union is declared "not to be forbidden by the laws of God," but "contrary to the general practice of Protestant churches and the feelings and opinions of many serious Christians among ourselves, and therefore ought to be discountenanced." Such cases are referred to the several judicatories.

4. Marriage with a sister's daughter. "Such a connection demands the judicial action of the Church, and if not repented of should incur church censure." *

5. Marriage of the relicts of a brother and of a sister. This is inexpedient, but not prohibited by the Levitical law.

6. Marriage with a half-brother's widow. In 1760 the majority of the Synod thought that this relation was contrary to the laws of God and of the land, and of a sinful and dangerous tendency; but as some learned members were not so clear on this point, the decision was deferred for the year, when it was decided to be

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 97.

unlawful, and demanding suspension from the communion while the relation was continued.*

7. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister. This has been frequently before the Church. In 1761 it was decided to be contrary to the Levitical law and the civil laws of the land, and worthy of church discipline. In 1783 the Synod decided "that although it may not be a direct violation of the express words of that (Levitical) law, yet as it is contrary to the practice of the Protestant Church in general, and an evidence of great untenderness toward many serious and well-disposed Christians, and may, through the prejudices or generally received opinions of the members of our Church, be productive of many disagreeable consequences, the persons contracting such marriages are highly censurable, and the practice ought to be disallowed in express terms by the Synod; and we do therefore condemn such marriages as imprudent and unseasonable. Yet as some things may be done very imprudently and unseasonably which when done ought not to be annulled, we are of the opinion that it is not necessary that the persons whom this judgment respects to separate from one another." Yet they must be solemnly admonished by the Session before they be received to the communion. The Synod recommended its members to abstain from solemnizing such marriages, and to discountenance them. In 1821 the marriage with a deceased wife's sister and all similar connections were declared to be "highly inexpedient, unfriendly to domestic purity and exceedingly offensive to a large portion of our churches." Yet the Assembly was by "no means prepared to decide that such marriages as that in question are so plainly prohibited in Scripture, and so undoubtedly incestuous, as necessarily to infer the

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 300, 303, 312.

exclusion of those who contract them from church privileges." The case was referred back to the Session. In 1826 one appealed from the decision of Presbytery suspending him from the communion for marrying his deceased wife's sister. The Assembly refused to sustain his appeal, on the ground that until the "Confession of Faith" (ch. xxiv., sect. iv.) was altered the sentence must stand. The Presbyteries, by a vote of 50 against 18, refused to erase the section. In 1842 the O. S. Assembly affirmed the decision of a Presbytery suspending a Minister from his office and from the communion of the Church for this offence. Three years later it granted the prayer of a memorial recommending the Presbytery to restore him to the communion and the ministry, as the ends of discipline in his case have been attained. In 1848 the O. S. Assembly refused to sustain the appeal of a man who was suspended from the church for marrying his deceased wife's sister. In 1879 the Assembly refused to take any steps toward changing this clause of the Confession of Faith.* But in 1886 an overture was sent to the Presbyteries, which was adopted the next year, striking out the clause in Chapter XXIV., Section 4, forbidding marriage with the near kindred of a deceased husband or wife.† See page 102.

Should divorces be discouraged?

"Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage, yet nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dis-

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 624. For the above decision see *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 814–818.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 97.

solving the bond of marriage; wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in the case."* The O. S. and N. S. Assemblies frequently called attention to the alarming tendency in some parts of the land to disregard the sacredness of the marriage-tie, and expressed their "abhorrence of any attempt to diminish its sanctity or to extend beyond the warrant of the Holy Scriptures the grounds of divorce."† In 1872 the Assembly uttered "its solemn protest against such loose opinions (on marriage and divorce, practically demoralizing), and calls upon all its Ministers to use their moral influence to create a more healthy sentiment in the community and a thoroughly scriptural practice in the Church."† In 1874 the Assembly reaffirmed the deliverance of the O. S. Assembly of 1869, expressing pain at the increasing prevalence of unscriptural views of the marriage relation, in consequence of which the obligations are often disregarded, and separations of husband and wife and divorces for slight and unwarrantable reasons are becoming more frequent every year. Ministers are urged to give proper instruction, and are warned not to join in marriage any who are divorced on unscriptural grounds.‡ This has often been reiterated, as in 1883.

What is fœticide?

The destruction of an unborn child. The deliverance of the O. S. Assembly in 1869, reaffirmed by the Assembly of 1874, speaks of this crime as well as of divorce: "Nor can we shut our eyes to the fact that the horrible crime of infanticide, especially in the form of destruction by parents of their own offspring before birth, also pre-

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiv., sect. vi.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 99, 100. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp., 99, 865.

vails to an alarming extent." The Assembly regards this "with abhorrence, as a crime against God and against nature; and as the frequency of such murders can no longer be concealed, we hereby warn those that are guilty of this crime that except they repent they cannot inherit eternal life." "All who seek to avoid the responsibilities and cares connected with bringing up children not only deprive themselves of one of the greatest blessings of life, and fly in the face of God's decrees, but do violence to their own natures, and will be found out of their sins even in this world." *

How are clandestine marriages to be regarded?

Ministers are to use great caution not to countenance them, especially when they have reason to suspect that the consent of parents or guardians is withheld.†

May an engagement of marriage be broken?

The parties "may lawfully agree to release each other from the promise." But rash engagements and unwarrantable methods of engaging are culpable; and in 1750 a public rebuke was administered by the Synod.‡

Should the purpose of marriage be published?

"Marriage is of public nature. The welfare of civil society, the happiness of families and the credit of religion are deeply interested in it. Therefore the purpose of marriage ought to be sufficiently published a proper time previously to the solemnization of it." § The Assembly was asked in 1820 what was a sufficient publication of the purpose of marriage, and replied that "the Presbyteries are the best judges in the case." † In the old countries, and formerly in this, the bans were

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 99, 100.

† *Ibid.*, p. 865. ‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 189.

§ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xii., sect. vi.

published in the church at least twice before the marriage could take place. At present an acknowledgment of the engagement in both families and among those interested is considered sufficient publication.

What Catechisms have been adopted by the Church?

"The 'Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly of Divines' are included in, and do constitute an integral part of, the standards of this Church." This was distinctly affirmed in the adopting act in 1729 and 1788; it was reasserted in 1832. These Catechisms were recognized as part of the standards during the separation of the O. S. and N. S. branches; they formed part of the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis at the reunion; and in 1872 the Assembly approved "of the revised copy of the 'Shorter Catechism,' with the ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Creed, presented by the Board of Publication, and hereby adopt the same as the standard edition of our Church."* See page 20.

In 1870 the Assembly recognized the "Heidelberg Catechism" as "a valuable scriptural compendium of Christian doctrine and duty," and approved of its use for the instruction of children by those churches which may desire it.†

Who should be taught the Catechisms?

Parents are exhorted at the baptism of their children to the careful performance of their duty in teaching them in the principles of our holy religion. And the Catechisms are commended to them as excellent summaries of doctrine, and as important helps in their performance of this duty.‡

Baptized children "are under the inspection and gov-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 8–10. † *Ibid.*, p. 10.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. viii., sect. iv.

ernment of the Church, and are to be taught to read and repeat the Catechism, etc." *

This has been frequently insisted upon by both branches of the Church, and by the reunited Church.†

All the children and youth in the Sabbath-schools should be thus taught. In 1878 the Assembly recommended the Board of Publication to incorporate in its system of Sabbath-school lesson-papers a brief exposition of the answers of the "Shorter Catechism," and through the Sessions urged on teachers and parents the duty of teaching to the children the doctrinal and governmental truths of our Church.‡

Candidates for licensure were required by the O. S. Assembly in 1868 to be well versed in the "Shorter Catechism," and in 1877 the Assembly commended all Candidates under the care of the Board to commit the whole Catechism.§

By whom should the Catechism be taught?

By parents, Sabbath-school teachers, and by the Pastors and Elders.§ The N. S. Assembly in 1849 declared "that the institution of Sabbath-schools does not exonerate ministers and parents from the duty of teaching the 'Shorter Catechism' to the children of the Church." All Ministers and Elders were urged to teach diligently the youth in the "Shorter Catechism," which was recommended as a text-book in the Sabbath-school.† Similar deliverances were made by the O. S. Assembly in 1840, 1846, 1854.‖ And in 1877 and 1885 these deliverances were reaffirmed and the Assembly re-

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. i.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 855.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 822, 826, 829, 855.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 555.
‖ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 183, 185, 186.

minded parents that no instruction in the Sabbath-school or elsewhere can supersede or supply their duty of catechising their children.*

The custom in Scotland, and to some extent in this country, was for the Pastor, with one or more Elders, to visit in turn the different districts of the congregation and catechise the families in their several houses or in some place of meeting. This usage has given place in this country to that of an annual or quarterly catechising of the children by the Pastor, or of giving regular instruction to the Sabbath-school each Sabbath in one or more answers in the "Shorter Catechism."

When should this instruction be given?

"Let the heads of families be careful to instruct their children and servants in the principles of religion. . . . We are of opinion that the Sabbath evenings after public worship should be sacredly preserved for this purpose." †

What is a Catechist?

Catechists are pious men, laymen, not generally Candidates for the ministry, but formally authorized to instruct the ignorant in the principles of religion as set forth in the Catechism. In 1800 it was proposed that an order of men called Catechists be employed among the Indians, the blacks and other ignorant persons. These Catechists were to be examined by Presbytery, and receive a certificate and recommendation, without which they should not be recognized. The Assembly refused to take immediate action, but considered it expedient that no Catechist should be sent out without further orders from the Assembly. In 1806 the plan of licensing uneducated men as

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 827.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. xvi., sect. v.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 826.

Catechists proposed by Rev. David Rice was not sanctioned by the Assembly, as it was considered "dangerous to the Church to employ illiterate men as exhorters or catechetical instructors." *

What is a Catechumen?

A Catechumen is one under catechetical instruction. In the early Church the applicants for baptism were, by the imposition of hands and the sign of the cross, recognized as such, and were placed under systematic instruction in the doctrines of Christianity. They were called Catechumens.

What collections should be taken in the church?

"*Making collections for the poor and other pious purposes.*" Provision was made for the poor in the Old-Testament dispensation (Ex. 23 : 9–11; Lev. 19 : 10). The first impulse of the Christian Church was to part their possessions and goods to all men as every man had need (Acts 2 : 45). The Apostles, in giving the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas as they departed to their mission to the heathen, charged them to remember the poor, which Paul was forward to do (Gal. 2 : 10). The first general collection of which we read was for the poor saints in Jerusalem (Rom. 15 : 24–27). The duty of contributing to the support of Ministers and for the extension of the Church in its various operations is enforced frequently, as in Matt. 10 : 10; Rom. 10 : 15; 15 : 27; 1 Cor. 9 : 7–14.

In the Presbyterian Church the Deacons are ordained to receive and distribute the poor fund.† As early as 1707 the General Presbytery called the attention of the Church to missions. At the first meeting of the Synod (1717) a fund was raised for pious uses—missionary

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 349, 350.

† See p. 63.

operations. All churches were recommended to take yearly collections for its increase.* The General Assembly has divided the general work of the Church, and appointed various Boards or Standing Committees to take the supervision of the several parts. These have been recommended to the confidence of the churches, which are enjoined to make yearly contributions to them. In 1755 the Synod declared that it is inconsistent with our church government for the Session to prohibit the synodical appointments concerning collections. This was repeated in 1790.† In 1872 the Assembly enjoined "upon all the churches the practice of periodical giving to all the causes recommended by the General Assembly, according to the principles commended by the word of God." The Presbyteries were required to question its Pastors if the directions of the Assembly had been complied with. And no church neglecting to contribute to the several Boards should receive aid from the funds of the Church.‡ In 1879 the Assembly declared that "the members of all our congregations have a right to an opportunity to contribute at least once a year to each of the Boards, as required by the highest authority of the Church, and the Sessions of the churches have no right to withhold that opportunity"—"that it is the duty of each Minister in charge to give information, set forth the privilege of giving, and urge the claims of each Board in connection with the annual collection."§

Besides these permanent objects of benevolence the Assembly, Synod and Presbytery may recommend from

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 321, 323.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 169. ‡ *Ibid.*, *1886*, p. 455,
§ *Ibid.*, *1898*, p. 400. See pp. 515–521.

time to time others which are not directly under the supervision of the Church.* Sessions also may order whatever collections they may deem proper to be taken in churches under their care.† Presbyteries should appoint Committees on the Boards who shall inquire what has prevented or limited contributions. In 1891 a new chapter on offerings was added to Book of Discipline. See page 567.

What is discipline?

"Discipline is the exercise of that authority and the application of that system of laws which the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed in his Church, embracing the care and control maintained by the Church over its members, officers and judicatories."‡ The Southern Presbyterian Church says that the "term has two senses, the one referring to the whole government, instruction, training, guardianship and control which the Church maintains over its members, its officers and its courts, and the other a restricted and technical sense, signifying judicial prosecution."§

Who are subjects of church discipline?

All communicants are subjects of discipline. "All children born within the pale of the visible Church are members of the Church, are to be baptized, are under the care of the Church, and subject to its government and discipline; and when they arrive at the years of discretion they are bound to perform all the duties of church members."‖ In 1878 "the Assembly solemnly reminded the churches in our connection that church discipline, in the scriptural

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 413, 826; *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 248.

† See p. 64.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 1. See p. 159.

§ *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. i., sect. i.

‖ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 5.

sense, includes not only the reformation of offenders and the removal of scandals, but also the prevention of offences by the proper instruction and training of the children of the Church in knowledge and godliness; and that to this end it is the duty of the Pastor and Sessions to take authoritative supervision of the instruction of youth, so far as to see to it that the baptized children of the Church are properly instructed in the family and Sabbath-school."*

The question, however, has often been asked, How far and in what sense are those persons who were baptized in infancy, but are non-communicants, subject to church discipline? In 1799 the public standards were considered to contain a sufficient answer. It has several times been referred to the serious consideration of Ministers and Presbyteries, and to learned committees, whose reports have been indefinitely postponed. No authoritative answer has been given. The theory of many is that these persons are subject to church discipline in the same sense that communicants are.† This is denied by others. The usage is, that the baptized non-communicants are subjects of the discipline (teaching) of the Church, as is described in the "Directory for Worship" (ch. ix., sect. i.), but are not liable to judicial prosecution. This is distinctly stated by the Southern Church: "In the one sense (inspection, training, guardianship and control) all baptized persons, being members of the Church, are subject to its discipline and entitled to the benefits thereof; but in the other (judicial prosecution) it refers only to those who have made a profession of their faith in Christ."‡ The second chapter of their "Book of Church Order" is devoted to "The Discipline of Non-communicating Mem-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 604, 634, 855. † See p. 134.

‡ *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. i., sect. ii.

bers," in which is described the oversight they should receive. "If they exhibit a wayward disposition and associate themselves with the profane, the Church should still cherish them in faith, and ought to use all such means as the word of God warrants and the Christian prudence of church officers shall dictate, for reclaiming them and bringing them to appreciate their covenant privileges and to discharge their covenant obligations." Those "who submit with meekness and gratitude to the government and instruction of the Church are entitled to special attention."

To what judicatories are persons primarily responsible?

Baptized members and communicants are primarily responsible to the Session of the church to which they belong.* "If a church becomes extinct, the Presbytery with which it was connected shall have jurisdiction over its members, and grant them letters of dismissal to some other church. It shall also determine any case of discipline begun by the Session and not concluded."† "A member of a church, receiving a certificate of dismission to another church, shall continue to be a member of the church giving him the certificate, and subject to the jurisdiction of its Session (but shall not deliberate or vote in a church meeting, nor exercise the functions of any office), until he has become a member of the church to which he is recommended, or some other evangelical church; and, should he return the certificate within a year from its date, the Session shall make record of the fact, but he shall not thereby be restored to the exercise of the functions of any office previously held by him in that church."‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 634. See p. 133.

† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 112.

‡ *Ibid.*, sect. 109.

Members under censure or sentence remain under the care of the Session which tried them.* Ruling Elders and Deacons are communicants, and are therefore subject to the Session. Yet under certain circumstances an Elder may be tried by the Presbytery.† Candidates and Licentiates, though under the care of the Presbyteries as to their studies, are yet members of a particular church, and are therefore responsible to the Session for their Christian character and conduct.‡

All Ministers are primarily responsible to the Presbyteries to which they belong.§ "If a Presbytery becomes extinct, the Synod, with which it was connected, shall have jurisdiction over its members, and may transfer them to any Presbytery within its bounds. It shall also determine any case of discipline begun by the Presbytery and not concluded."‖ A Minister permitted by the Presbytery to demit his office "returns to the condition of a private member in the church;" his name is stricken from the roll of Presbytery, and he receives from that body "a letter to any church he may desire to connect himself with." This rule also applies to one deposed from the Ministry.¶

"The judicatory to which a church member or a Minister belongs shall have sole jurisdiction for the trial of offences whenever or wherever committed by him."** "But the higher judicatories may institute process in cases in which the lower have been directed so to do, and have refused or neglected to obey."††

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 166.
† See p. 58. ‡ See p. 133. § See p. 210.
‖ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 113.
¶ *Ibid.*, sect. 51, 44. ** *Ibid.*, sect. 108.
†† *Ibid.*, sect. 18.

Who may pronounce the benediction?

"The benediction is an authoritative blessing of the people of God in the name of Christ. It partakes partly of the nature of a prayer, and partly of the declaration of the will and purpose of God. . . . When the form is used by Licentiates or others, its nature is changed, and it assumes the character of a prayer merely. It is doubted by some whether the form should ever be used by Licentiates. Our Church has not, however, given any deliverance on the subject." Such is a note in the "Assembly's Digest," p. 108. It is evidently a ministerial act, and is so regarded in all denominations. Licentiates are not Ministers.* In the "Form of Government" it is frequently referred to, but only as pronounced by Ministers.†

CHAPTER VIII.

OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, AND THE SEVERAL KINDS OF JUDICATORIES.

I. Is a definite form of government necessary?

"*It is absolutely necessary that the government of the Church be exercised under some certain and definite form.*" This is evidently as necessary in the Church as in the State. If laws are to be obeyed and executed, they must be definite and known. No individual, much less a body of men, can be governed by general and changing opinions or principles. God has given, there-

* See p. 355.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. viii.; ch. xv., sect. xiv., *Directory for Worship*, ch. i., sect. v.; ch. vii., sect. v.; *The General Rules for Judicatories*, xliii.

fore, a definite law, forms of worship and government.* What God has appointed cannot be unnecessary. Those societies or churches which have no definite form of government are in frequent confusion and trouble (Ezek. 43 : 11, 12; 2 Tim. 1 : 13; Gal. 6 : 16; Phil. 3 : 16).†

Where should we look for a form of church government?

We should look to expediency, to the nature of the Church as the kingdom of Christ, to the Scriptures—especially of the New Testament—and to the practice of the primitive Church and of those churches which were not corrupted. *"We hold it to be expedient, and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the Church be governed by congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies."*

What form of church government is thus taught?

Expediency, the nature of the Church, the Scriptures and the practice of the early Church, we hold, unite in teaching the Presbyterian form of church government; that is, that the Church should be governed by courts composed of Ministers, all of the same order, and of Elders, representing the people, chosen by them, ordained to their office and having an equal voice in all questions with the Ministers; and that these courts should be congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies, the smaller being subject to the larger, and all to that body which represents the whole Church (Matt. 18 : 15–20; Acts 15 : 2–28; 1 Cor. 5 : 4; 1 Tim. 4 : 14).‡

* See the ten commandments, the ceremonial law and the government under Elders in the Old Dispensation, and in the New Testament the definite qualifications and duties of church officers and courts, and the laws to be administered and the penalties to be inflicted. † See p. 30. ‡ *What is Presbyterianism?* pp. 8–76.

Is this form of government essential?

No. "The Church consists of all those persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws." Their faith, confession and submission, and the outward organization may be very faulty, a misinterpretation of the divine plan; it is still a visible Church. Its imperfect organization exposes it to dangers. Faith in Christ and submission to him are the only essential characteristics of a Christian and of a Church.* *"In full consistency with this belief, we embrace, in the spirit of charity, those Christians who differ from us in opinion and practice on these subjects."*

How should other denominations be regarded?

All churches "making profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws" should be "embraced in the spirit of charity." Their creeds, laws, worship, sacraments and discipline should be respected, as far as they may be consistent with the word of God.† With these correspondence and co-operation should be maintained.‡ The Committee on Church Unity, appointed in 1887 to confer with the Episcopal Church, reported in 1896 that "mutual recognition and reciprocity," regarded by us as essential, had not been conceded. The Assembly suspended the correspondence, hoping it might hereafter be reopened by the acceptance of this prerequisite.†

Those bodies which deny the holy religion of Christ, as the "Unitarian," cannot be recognized as churches. Other heretical denominations, denying essential doctrines, for the same reason cannot be regarded as parts of the

* *Form of Government*, ch. ii., sect. ii.; *Church Polity*, p. 44.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118. ‡ See p. 275.

Church. As to the so-called Church of Rome, see p. 84. A schismatical body of Ministers and communicants cannot be regarded as deriving authority from the Church from which they withdrew, but are to be regarded in the same light as other denominations not connected with our body.*

II. Should church courts possess civil power?

"*These assemblies ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction, nor to inflict any civil penalties. Their power is wholly moral or spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative.*" The State cannot make laws for the Church, nor can the Church call on the State to execute her laws, (Luke 12 : 13, 14; John 18 : 36; Acts 15 : 1–32).† The Southern Church says: "The sole functions of the Church as a kingdom and government, distinct from the civil commonwealth, are to proclaim, to administer and to enforce the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures." ‡ Our Assembly protested against the appropriation of public moneys to sectarian schools, as prejudicial to national welfare and unconstitutional.§

Is the "power wholly moral and spiritual"?

"The Church has no temporal authority, and its courts are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary, or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate."‖ The Church is a spiritual kingdom, and

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 104, 228; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 646.

† *Authorized Standards of the Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 339–375; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 154; *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiii., sect. iii. See pp. 18 and 23.

‡ *Book of Church Order*, ch. ii., sect. iii., sub-sect. iii.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 298.

‖ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxxi., sect. iv.

not of this world (John 18 : 36), and therefore its authority is moral and spiritual, and has to do with our relation to God and his laws.

What is meant by the power being "ministerial and declarative"?

The Church has no inherent or sovereign power. Christ is the sole and absolute Head of the Church —the Lawgiver, whose laws must be administered by the courts of the Church as his ministers, in his name and according to his will. They can only declare his law and its application (Acts 15 : 1–32).*

What offences can they examine?

"Anything, in the doctrine, principles or practice of a church member, officer or judicatory which is contrary to the word of God; or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification."†

What power do church courts have?

"*They possess the right of requiring obedience to the laws of Christ, and of excluding the disobedient and disorderly from the privileges of the Church. To give efficiency, however, to this necessary and scriptural authority, they possess the powers requisite for obtaining evidence and inflicting censure. They can call before them any offender against the order and government of the Church; they can require members of their own society to appear and give testimony in the cause.*" This power is alike over individuals and church courts. In 1877 the Assembly declared that "the proper remedy for the Presbytery to apply to that Session" (which had failed to discipline a member when directed to do so), "if they continue to dis-

* *Form of Government*, ch. i., sect. vii. See p. 27.

† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 3; *Shorter Catechism*, Qq. 46–81.

obey the instructions of the Presbytery, is to put the Session under discipline for contumacy."*

What penalties can church courts inflict?

"*But the highest punishment to which their authority extends is to exclude the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of believers.*" The penalty must be determined by the offence and the circumstances under which it was committed. "The censures to be inflicted by the Session are, Admonition, Rebuke, Suspension or Deposition from office, Suspension from the communion of the Church, and, in the case of offenders who will not be reclaimed by milder measures, Excommunication." By the last of these the offender is cut off from the visible Church (Matt. 18 : 15–20; 1 Cor. 5 : 4, 5).†

How are penalties to be inflicted?

After regular trial before the court having jurisdiction. Yet in cases of self-accusation, confession of guilt, offence before the judicatory, application for demission, removal without dismission, absence from the ordinances, irregular uniting with another denomination and obstinate impenitence under suspension, judgment may be given without process.‡ "The sentence shall be published, if at all, only in the church or churches which have been offended."§ "In the infliction or removal of church censures, judicatories shall observe the modes prescribed in chapter xi. of the 'Directory for Worship.'"‖ The sentence of excommunication shall be "publicly pronounced against the offender." "But the judicatory may omit the publication of the excommunication, when it judges that there is sufficient reason for such omission."¶

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 531. † *Book of Discipline*, sect. 34.
‡ *Ibid.*, sects. 21, 40, 47–53; *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi.
§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 35. ‖ *Ibid.*, sect. 30.
¶ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sect. vi.

A Minister may be "admonished, rebuked, suspended or deposed from office (with or without suspension from church privileges, in either case), or excommunicated. A Minister suspended from office may, at the expiration of one year, unless he gives satisfactory evidence of repentance, be deposed without further trial."* The sentence against a Minister is generally published in some way to the whole Church.

How can these penalties be removed?

(1) "When the judicatory shall be satisfied as to the reality of the repentance of any suspended member, he shall be allowed to profess his repentance, and be restored to fellowship, in the presence of the Session, or of the Church."† A Minister "shall not be restored, even on the deepest sorrow for sin, until after considerable time of eminent and exemplary, humble and edifying conduct; and he ought in no case to be restored, until it shall clearly appear to the judicatory, within whose bounds he resides, that the restoration can be effected without injury to the cause of religion; and then only by the judicatory inflicting the censure, or with its advice and consent."‡

(2) By a superior court reversing the decision on review, or appeal or complaint.§

What other powers have church courts?

They have power to administer oaths to witnesses, to interpret laws, to review the records and decisions of the lower courts; to receive members; "to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the Church;" to examine and license and ordain Can-

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 40.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sect. iv.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 43. § *Ibid.*, sects. 74, 83, 94.

didates for the ministry; to install and dismiss Pastors; to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline; to condemn erroneous opinions; to visit churches, redress evils, unite or divide congregations or form new ones; "to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care; to erect, unite or divide Presbyteries;" to see that Presbyteries observe the constitution of the Church; "to propose such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church;" to decide all controversies respecting doctrine or discipline; to bear testimony against error and immorality; to erect new Synods; to superintend the concerns of the whole Church, correspond with foreign churches; to suppress schismatical disputations; to recommend "reformation of manners and the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under our care." *

For what object is church authority to be used?

"The ends of discipline are the maintenance of the truth, the vindication of the authority and honor of Christ, the removal of offenses, the promotion of the purity and edification of the Church, and the spiritual good of offenders" (1 Cor. 5 : 4; 14 : 26; Tit. 1 : 9; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13; Heb. 13 : 17).†

In what spirit is this authority to be exercised?

In the spirit of Jesus Christ, with humility, meekness, long-suffering, gentleness, firmness, and without fear or partiality (Gal. 6 : 1; 2 Cor. 10 : 1, 8–10; 1 Tim. 5 : 1; Tit. 1 : 13; James 2 : 4, 9; 3 : 19; 2 Tim. 4 : 2). The exercise of discipline "in such a manner as to secure its appropriate ends requires much prudence and discretion." † "Great caution ought to be exercised in re-

* *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. vi.; ch. x., sect. viii.; ch. xi., sect iv.; ch. xii., sect. v.

† *Book of Discipline*, sect 2.

ceiving accusations from any person who is known to indulge a malignant spirit toward the accused, or who is not of good character, or who is himself under censure or process, or who is personally interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused, or who is known to be litigious, rash or highly imprudent."*

How many church courts are there?

"*The Church* (should) *be governed by congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies.*"

The congregational assembly is called the church Session, and "consists of the Pastor or Pastors and Ruling Elders of a particular congregation."†

"The Presbytery consists of all the Ministers, in number not less than five, and one Ruling Elder from each congregation, within a certain district."‡ Until 1716 this was the highest church judicatory in this country, and is now often referred to as the General Presbytery.

"The Synod is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries."§ From 1716 to 1788 the Synod was the highest judicatory.

"The General Assembly is the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church. It shall represent in one body all the particular churches of this denomination." It consists of Bishops and Elders from each Presbytery.‖

What courts have the right to testify against erroneous and injurious publications?

In the opinion of the General Assembly any of our church courts have the right and responsibility to bear witness against any printed publication which is circulated within

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 13.

† *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. i. ‡ *Ibid.*, ch. x., sect. ii.

§ *Ibid.*, ch. xi., sect. i. ‖ *Ibid.*, ch. xii., sects. i. and ii. See p. 17

their bounds, which in its judgment inculcates injurious opinions, whether the author be dead or living, or whether in our denomination or not. Any church court may warn its Church against any erroneous book, even when it is not thought necessary to arraign the author as a heretic. This right is regarded as one of the most precious and powerful means of bearing testimony and of guarding the Church from error.*

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE CHURCH SESSION.

I. Of whom does the church Session consist?

"*The church Session consists of the Pastor or Pastors, and Ruling Elders of a particular congregation.*"

Can a special Session be appointed?

Ruling Elders have jurisdiction only over those whom they represent.† The Presbytery cannot therefore authorize them to serve in other churches. The appointment by Presbytery of a "special Session" that is "composed of Elders belonging to different congregations," even to try a case of discipline, "is entirely unconstitutional." So the Assembly decided in 1823 and 1824. The O. S. Assembly in 1860 refused "to make provision for the calling of special Sessions of Ruling Elders from neighboring churches to obviate delays in cases of discipline for want of quorums of church Sessions."† In the decision of 1824 it is stated that "no Presbytery has authority, according to the constitution of our

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 156. † *Ibid.*, p. 158. See p. 57.

Church, to delegate to a committee power to perform such acts as those"—to sit in judgment upon a member of the church and an Elder, and condemn him.*

What can be done if the Session cannot act?

If the church be without a Pastor, the Presbytery should appoint a Moderator, or the Session may invite some Minister of the same Presbytery to moderate the Session on a particular occasion; or, if that be impracticable, one of the Elders may preside.†

If the Session be small, and the only Elder or Elders be accused, the Presbytery is the competent court to try the offender, and it is its duty to do so.‡

If the Session be small, or its members be more or less interested in the case of discipline, or "cases which are new, important or difficult, of peculiar delicacy, the decision of which may establish principles or precedents of extensive influence, on which the inferior judicatory is greatly divided, or on which for any reason it is desirable that a superior judicatory should first decide," the Session may refer to the Presbytery for advice or for ultimate trial and decision.§

II. What constitutes a quorum of Session?

"*Of this judicatory, two Elders, if there be as many in the congregation, with the Pastor, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.*" The O. S. Assembly in 1852 refused to propose a change in the constitution authorizing a Pastor and one Elder to perform sessional acts, when the other Elder shall, in the judgment of Presbytery, be from any cause incompetent to act in the case. If there be but one Elder, he with the Pastor or the Moderator

* See pp. 196, 226. † See pp. 128–132.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 151. See p. 58.

§ *Book of Discipline*, sects. 78, 79.

appointed by Presbytery, form the Session capable of transacting business even of a judicial character. The O. S. Assembly in 1869 decided that if one of the two Elders refuse to act, and has left the church, the other is entitled to be regarded as the only Elder. The Pastor and the one Elder actually in the congregation are a legal quorum, reaffirmed in 1892. "In the absence of ordained Elders, a Session may consist of the missionaries in charge of the work on a foreign field."*

Is a quorum complete without a Minister?

No. But by section iv., in certain cases in which "it is impracticable without great inconvenience to procure the attendance of such a Moderator" (a Minister), "the Session may proceed without it," one of the Elders presiding. The N. S. Assembly in 1869 decided that "the Session, under its responsibility to Presbytery, is the judge of the impracticability of procuring a Moderator."* If the church has a Pastor, it is evident from this section that he must be present. The Elders cannot hold a meeting of Session without him, except "in the case of the sickness or absence of the Pastor," when a Minister of the same Presbytery must preside.†

May less than a quorum transact business?

"The law of a quorum is not a mere rule of procedure, a provision of order, but a matter respecting the very being of the judicatory. Any number of members less than a constituted quorum do not make a judicatory, and are not competent to any organic act." So said the N. S. Assembly in 1861.* The O. S. Assembly and that of the reunited Church have always acted in accordance with the above, refusing to recognize any act deter-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 159–162.

† See p. 129.

mined by less than a quorum of the court, until it be reaffirmed or authorized by some competent body. In cases of real necessity less than a quorum may meet, consult and determine even important business informally. The action may be reported at the next meeting of the Session, and becomes valid only when adopted by the Session as its own action. Such informal meetings of the members of Session are not infrequent, and are sometimes very important, but they are not meetings of Session, and are incapable of any organic act.*

III. Who is the Moderator of Session?

"*The Pastor of the congregation shall always be the Moderator of the Session.*" He is Moderator by virtue of his office and the act of Presbytery which installed him. He is not accountable to the church nor to the Session for his conduct or decisions as Moderator. No appeal can be taken, even on points of order, to the Session or to the congregation. He is responsible only to the Presbytery, by which alone he can be overruled, tried and judged.† "An appeal to the church Session from the Moderator, if he be a Minister, would not be in order. In this case exceptions to his decision must be filed to go before the Presbytery."‡

Is there any exception?

"*Except when, for prudential reasons, it may appear advisable that some other Minister should be invited to preside; in which case the Pastor may, with the concurrence of the Session, invite such other Minister as they may see meet, belonging to the same Presbytery, to preside in that case. The same expedient may be adopted in case of the*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 161.

† *Book of Discipline*, sects. 18, 108.

‡ *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, p. 167.

sickness or absence of the Pastor." The Pastor is a member of Session, even if for certain reasons he does not preside.* Ministers of other Presbyteries cannot be invited to moderate the Session. But in 1843 the O. S. Assembly determined that it is "orderly that a member of one Presbytery moderate a church Session of another Presbytery." In the next year, however, the following resolution was passed: "That the last General Assembly, in deciding that a Session may invite a Minister who is a member of another Presbytery to sit as their Moderator, did not include any of those cases in which it is required either in express terms or by plain implication ('Form of Government,' ch. iv., sects. iii. and iv.) that the Moderator shall be of the same Presbytery as the congregation; but (we) are of opinion that in cases of a different kind, for which no provision is made, a member of another Presbytery may be invited to act as Moderator if it be found expedient." † "In the absence of the Pastor and great inconvenience in procuring a Moderator, having no ordained Minister of the same Presbytery residing within forty miles," the N. S. Assembly decided in 1869 that "there is no provision for inviting any Minister not belonging to the same Presbytery to preside over a meeting of Session, much less any Minister of the word."* The Assembly of 1891 said it is not lawful for a Minister of another Presbytery to preside.†

Can a Stated Supply act as Moderator?

Only a Minister can be Moderator of the Session. A Stated Supply, Missionary, Candidate, or Pastor elect has no authority in the particular church, and therefore cannot act as Moderator, unless he has been appointed by Presbytery to preside over the Session, or

**Presbyterian Digest*, p. 162. † *Ibid.*, p. 163.

unless he has been "invited by the Session to preside on a particular occasion."* "A Stated Supply has not the right, power and prerogative in the church Session as a Pastor."*

May a Pastor emeritus preside over Session?

The title "Pastor emeritus" is an honorable title, and, though the pastoral relation is not formally dissolved, he ceases to be the acting Pastor, and has no more official power in that church, than an Elder has who for similar reasons ceases to be an acting Elder.† He therefore cannot claim a seat in Session. As any other member of the Presbytery, he may be invited to preside on a particular occasion.

May an assistant Pastor?

Unless installed as a co-Pastor, he has no seat in Session, except when invited to preside on a particular occasion. If a co-Pastor, he presides in turn by virtue of his office.‡

IV. When a church is without a Pastor, who is the Moderator?

"*The Moderator of the Session shall be, either the Minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, or one invited by the Session to preside on a particular occasion,*" or one of the Elders, "*where it is impracticable without great inconvenience to procure the attendance of such a Moderator*" (a Minister). The invited minister must be a member of the same Presbytery.

When is it especially necessary to have a Minister?

When the Session is "*constituted for judicial business.*"

What is judicial business?

Any act of discipline, but especially the formal trial

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 147, 161.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. vi. ‡ See p. 132.

of an accused person.* "Whenever a judicatory is about to sit in a judicial capacity, it shall be the duty of the Moderator solemnly to announce from the chair that the body is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty in which they are about to act." †

Why is it then especially necessary that a Minister should preside?

Because judicial business is the most responsible that can come before the Session, and is the highest exercise of its authority.‡ It is to be presumed that the Minister will have a fuller knowledge of the rules of church order and discipline, and be better able to exercise the spirit of piety, prudence and discretion required by the "Book of Discipline," sect. 2.

V. When there are co-Pastors who is the Moderator?

"*In congregations where there are two or more Pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside in the Session.*" However they may differ in age and the length of their pastorates, they are officially equal and have like voice and authority in Session. This of course does not forbid the young man, even when presiding, to pay special respect and deference to the opinions and wishes of his aged and more experienced colleague.

VI. With what duty is the Session charged?

"*The church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation.*"

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. ii.

† *General Rules for Judicatories*, xl. See p. 537.

‡ See the above admonition ordered to be given.

Over whom does it exercise its authority?

All the members of the church—full communicants, those who have been suspended from church privileges,* and all baptized persons.†

Where does original jurisdiction over church members belong?

To the Session. Not to the congregation, "no vote of the congregation of a Presbyterian church can affect the rights of a communing member as such," all such power is vested in the Session.‡ Nor to the higher courts. In certain cases an Elder may be tried directly by the Presbytery.§ The Presbytery may require the Session to proceed to discipline a member.‖

Are Candidates and Licentiates members of the church?

They are members of the particular church, and are, as such, responsible to the Session. They are under the care of Presbytery as to their studies and qualifications for the ministry. The Presbytery may regulate these, or arrest their preparation, or recall their license. If discipline is necessary, the Session must cite and try them, informing the Moderator of Presbytery when charges are tabled against them, that proper action may be taken at once in regard to their license to preach.¶

Is the Pastor to be enrolled as a member of the church?

Neither the Pastor nor any Minister is to be considered as a member of the church. He is not under the

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 3; *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. iii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 166.

† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 5. See p. 114.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 164. § See p. 58.

‖ See pp. 231, 232. ¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 560. See pp. 201, 355.

care of the particular church, but is a member of the Presbytery, under its care and responsible to it.*

What is the first power of Session mentioned?

"*To inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members of the church.*" This includes the oversight (1) of the doctrinal views and growth in the knowledge of the truth, (2) and of the outward life (Heb. 13 : 17; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13; 1 Tim. 5 : 17).

Are the Sabbath-schools and home instruction under the care of the Session?

The Sabbath-school is the chief means for the public instruction of the young, and is therefore under the direct control of the Session. The teachers, books, rules and officers must be subject to its approval. "The Session cannot delegate its responsibility for the religious instruction of the children of the Church."† The home instruction is a very important means of grace, and the Session are required to see that the children receive proper training and instruction in the family and at school.† In 1849 the placing of children in R. Catholic schools was declared a violation of covenant engagement of parents.† Presbyterian sons in U. S. academies should be commended to our own churches.‡

What is the second power of Session?

That of trial. "*To call before them offenders and witnesses, being members of their own congregation, and to introduce other witnesses where it may be necessary to bring the process to issue, and when they can be procured to attend.*"

* *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. ii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 174; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 18.

† *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, p. 46; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 824–827.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1886*, p. 72.

Offenders cannot be tried by the Session of another church. What constitutes an offence; under what circumstances it may be brought before the Session; how the charges are to be drawn up; how they are to be presented; and how the trial is to be conducted, are questions which are answered in the "Book of Discipline," chs. i., ii., iii., iv., v. Prior to 1884, offenses were either private or public, to each of which appropriate modes of proceeding belonged. Charges could be tabled by individual accuser or by "Common fame." But by the "Book of Discipline" then adopted the distinction is ignored, save that in the case of personal injury the prosecutor must try the means of reconciliation required by our Lord in Matthew 18 : 15.* "Process against an alleged offender shall not be commenced unless some person undertakes to sustain the charge; or unless a judicatory finds it necessary for the ends of discipline to investigate the alleged offense." * "When the prosecution is initiated by a judicatory, THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA shall be the prosecutor and an original party; in all other cases the individual prosecutor shall be an original party."* The Pastor may represent the prosecutor.† If one is "his own accuser and makes known his offence, the judicatory may proceed to judgment without process, giving the offender an opportunity to be heard."‡

"Citations shall be served personally, unless the person to be cited cannot be found, in which case the citation shall be sent to his last known place of residence; and, before proceeding to trial, it must appear that the citations have been served," giving ten days' notice.§

* *Book of Discipline*, sects. 6, 8, 10; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 637.

† *Minutes G. A. 1890*, p. 47. ‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 47.

§ *Ibid.*, sects. 19, 20.

If the accused refuse to appear, he must be cited a second time, and warned that "if he do not appear at the time appointed, unless providentially hindered, he will be censured for his contumacy," and that after appointing for him a counsel the Session "may proceed to trial and judgment in his absence."*

Who may be summoned as offenders?

"*Members of the congregation*" against whom charges are tabled. (In regard to baptized members, see pp. 113, 114.) It should be noticed that the declaration that all baptized children "are members of the Church, ... are under care of the Church and subject to its government and discipline," is found in the "Book of Discipline" (sect. 5), which treats only of judicial process—of offenses, charges, trial and sentence. A dismissed member, committing an offense while *in transitu*, is still under the jurisdiction of the Session which dismissed him.†

"If one who considers himself slandered requests an investigation which a judicatory finds it proper to institute, one or more of its members shall be appointed to investigate the alleged slander, and make report in writing: and a record thereafter made may conclude the matter."‡

Who may be appointed counsel for the accused?

"No professional counsel shall be permitted to appear and plead in cases of process in any of our ecclesiastical judicatories." The accused "may request any Minister or Elder belonging to the judicatory before which he appears to prepare and exhibit his cause, as he may judge proper."§

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 21.
† See p. 115.
‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 12.
§ *Ibid.*, sect. 26.

What witnesses may be summoned?

The Session may call before them "*witnesses, being members of their own congregation, and introduce other witnesses where it may be necessary to bring the process to issue, and when they can be procured to attend.*" If they refuse to appear, they must be cited a second time, and dealt with as the accused when he refuses.* The Session has no authority over the communicants of another church, but "they can be procured to attend" by request made personally or through the Session to which they are subject. Those witnesses who are not members of the Presbyterian Church may be procured by request. The accused shall "receive the names of all the witnesses then known to support each specification." He "shall not be required to disclose the names of his witnesses."† The testimony may sometimes be taken by a commission in the place where the witnesses reside. The commission must consist of two or three members of the Session, and be appointed for that purpose, with due notice given to all parties. The testimony thus received shall be considered as if taken before the judicatory.‡ Any member of the Session may be called upon to give testimony: this does not interfere with his remaining a judge in the case.§ The O. S. Assembly in 1854 decided that a member of the court could not excuse himself on the ground that he had received no citation.‖ The Assembly of 1878 declared that the prosecution has "the right to introduce members of the court on the spot, without a citation, to disprove and rebut certain testimony of the defence." ‖ The O. S. Assembly in 1854

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 67.
† *Ibid.*, sects. 19, 23.
‡ *Ibid.*, sect. 65.
§ *Ibid.*, sect. 66.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 674.

was asked in regard to a Minister declining to appear as witness when cited by the Session, and replied enjoining prudence and a second citation, and referring to his accountability to Presbytery.*

After the witnesses have been examined "new witnesses and other evidence, in rebuttal only, may be introduced by either party. But evidence discovered in the progress of the trial may be admitted in behalf of either party, ... as the judicatory shall deem reasonable and proper."†

May non-church members appear as witnesses?

"Persons who are not church members, even though heathen, of good repute, may be admitted to testify. Their credibility is to be determined by the judicatory.‡

If charges be presented, must the accused be tried?

The accused has the right to file objections and to be heard. The Session may then "determine all such preliminary objections, and may dismiss the case, or permit, in the furtherance of justice, amendments to the specifications or charges not changing the general nature of the same." "If the proceeding be found in order, and the charges and specifications be considered sufficient to put the accused on his defence," the trial must proceed.§ If one injured by a slanderous publication tables charges against the author, an explanation by the accused and an exhortation to him to be more careful in his publication will not justify the Session to dismiss the charges. The Session ought either to entertain the charge or to "adopt a minute declaring him free from the imputations of the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 674.

† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 23.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 669.

§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 22.

published articles."* In 1881 the Assembly, in considering a complaint against a court for refusing a trial, declared "that upon the facts stated by the Presbytery as the basis of its action, the question whether the investigation asked for should be entered upon or not was one to be determined in the exercise of a sound discretion on the part of the Presbytery."†

May a court discontinue an investigation which it has commenced?

Such a case was presented to the Assembly in 1881, which replied: "The investigation, being entered upon by the Presbytery on its own motion, was under its control, and could be lawfully discontinued, with the consent of the accused, if in the judgment of the Presbytery its further prosecution would be useless or injurious to the Church."‡

May a communicant demand a trial?

It sometimes happens that a rumor seriously affecting the Christian character of a communicant becomes widely spread, and no one appears as accuser, and the Session neglects to summon him, or slanderous statements may be made in open court. In such cases the member may demand a trial for his exculpation, or he may table charges for slander against those who have originated or circulated the reports.§

What is the third power of the Session?

"*To receive members into the church.*" This includes (1) the receiving persons from the world on profession of their faith and by baptism.‖ In 1872 the Assembly

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 117.

† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 12; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 638.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 588.

§ See p. 136. ‖ *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. iv.

said "that the admission of persons to the sealing ordinances is confided by the 'Form of Government' really and exclusively to the church Session."*

Persons holding the universal and actual salvation of the whole human race or of fallen angels are not to be received.† Nor are those refusing to be baptized with water.‡

Parents declining to present their children for baptism are not to be refused on account of scruples concerning infant baptism, yet in every such case the Session must judge of the expediency of admitting them.† Duelists and those who have been accessories are not to be received until they manifest a just sense of guilt and give satisfactory evidence of repentance. (Ministers are recommended not to attend the funeral of one who has fallen in a duel.)† Sabbath-breakers, including all those who carry on secular occupations on the Lord's Day, further than necessity and mercy may demand, with a view to secure worldly advantages, are to be refused.†

No general rule is to be made concerning those engaged in the sale of intoxicating liquors, but the Session must judge in each case as to his reception or rejection.§ In 1865 the O. S. Assembly said: "It is not adopting any new term of communion to exclude persons from sealing ordinances on the ground of their manufacturing and vending intoxicating drinks as a beverage. On the contrary, it is only falling back upon the teachings of the Bible and the constitution of the Church, which requires visible Christianity, in a credible form, of those who would partake of these ordinances, and refuses the privileges to those who by overt acts of offence fail to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 861. † *Ibid.*, p. 857.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 627.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 631. See p. 510.

present such evidence." * In 1877 the Assembly called upon "the Sessions of our churches to guard carefully the purity of our Church, by refusing to admit to membership, or to retain those within her pale, who are engaged in the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, or who derive their livelihood from this sinful traffic." †

(2) The receiving of communicants from other churches. This can be done only on certificates, orderly drawn up, and within one year of the date of their issue. ‡ If a church of another denomination refuses to give a letter of dismissal, a certificate of good standing should be sought. If this be denied, and there be no charges against the applicant, and the Session has satisfactory information concerning his Christian life, he may be received on profession of his faith.

(3) The receiving of baptized members to full communion and to all the privileges of the church on an examination of their knowledge and faith. § The O. S. Assembly in 1853 declared that "every Session must judge for themselves of that degree of knowledge of Christian doctrine and adherence thereto on the part of those examined by them, which may render their reception suitable and for their own edification and the peace of the Church." In 1864 the N. S. Assembly said: "For their guidance in the matters noticed in the overture (as to dancing, card-playing and the use, manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors) reference is made to past acts of the Assembly, found in 'Digest,' ch. vii., on Moral

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 623. † *Ibid.*, p. 624.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 167, 169, 798. See p. 149.

§ *Directory for Worship*, ch. x.

Questions." * A communicants' class should be held in each church, by the Pastor, for a month before each communion, for instruction of candidates.†

And (4) the restoration of those who have been under church discipline, on satisfactory evidence of their repentance and reformation.‡

When does church membership begin?

(1) At birth. When the parents are professing Christians, then the children are "born in the pale of the visible Church," "which consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children." §

(2) When the applicant is received by the Session on certificate. The Session represents the church, and is the only body which has power to receive members. Nothing more is necessary to give validity to the act of the Session. The reception is generally published from the pulpit at the next administration of the Lord's Supper, and sometimes even by the personal appearance of the new communicant before the congregation, and sometimes a form is observed of public welcome by the Pastor and church members. A formula was proposed in 1873 to the Assembly by a committee appointed for that purpose: this was ordered to be printed in the Minutes and was referred to the next Assembly, which, after some discussion, indefinitely postponed the matter. In 1875 the Assembly refused to reconsider the subject.‖ In 1865 the N. S. Assembly, speaking of the confessions of faith and covenants used in local churches for the recognition of mem-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 607–615. † *Ibid.*, p. 852.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sect. vii.

§ *Ibid.*, ch. ix., sect. i.; *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxv., sect. ii.; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 5.

‖ *Presby'n Digest*, p. 861; *Min. G. A. 1874*, pp. 16, 52; *1875*, p. 506.

bers, says that their use may be determined by the Session; but "whether used or not, the vote of Session is, by the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, the act on which membership depends." And in 1872 the Assembly asserted "that the admission of persons to sealing ordinances is confided by the 'Form of Government' really and exclusively to the church Session;" "that any forms, for publicly recognizing those who have been thus admitted to sealing ordinances, should keep in view the principle thus declared."* Notice of reception should be immediately sent to the Session dismissing.†

(3) On the profession of faith before the Session. If the applicant has not been baptized, he is received into membership by the Session on profession of his faith, and therefore has a right to baptism. He is to be baptized, not to become a member, but because he is a member of the Church. The N. S. Assembly in 1865 stated that the administration of baptism "must of course be involved in and attendant upon this sessional act, either at the time, which would be entirely proper, or at a subsequent period appointed for that purpose." In 1867 it asserted, "The vote of Session does not entitle an unbaptized person to privileges of the Church, for the reason that baptism, as our 'Confession of Faith' declares (ch. xxviii., sect. i.), is declared to be a sacrament for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church."‡ The report of the committee appointed by the Assembly of 1872, which was referred to the next Assembly, and finally indefinitely postponed, says: "The act of Session must be regarded as *inchoate* till baptism, as enjoined by our constitution and the New Testament, is administer-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 166, 861. † *Ibid.*, p. 800.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

ed."* Dr. Hodge says: "Baptism does not make a man a member of the Church; it is the public and orderly recognition of his membership."† This baptism may be administered before the Session or the congregation.‡

May a Session refuse to receive a communicant presenting a certificate from another church?

If the certificate be regular and in order, the Session may refuse to receive the applicant if not satisfied with his knowledge and piety, or if they deem it inexpedient for the church to receive him. The Session must judge of the qualifications of its members. This principle was declared by the N. S. Assembly in 1864.§ It has been frequently recognized by the O. S. Assembly and by the reunited Church. Our "Form of Government" gives this right to all the courts. The Assembly has always defended the privilege of the Presbytery to judge by examination the fitness of its members.‖ Swedenborgians cannot be received on certificate.¶ Nor can members be received from or dismissed to the Christian Science Church.**

If the certificate be a qualified one, the Session must judge of the circumstances, their personal knowledge of the Christian life of the candidate, and the propriety of admitting him.††

May members be received without a formal meeting of the Session?

The reception of members is one of the most important acts and prerogatives of the Session. The Pastor and Elders meeting informally or without a quorum do

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 167.
† *Church Polity*, p. 246; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 5.
‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. iv.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 859. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 204.
¶ *Minutes G. A. 1886*, p. 37. ** *Ibid.*, *1898*, p. 56.
†† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 116.

not constitute a Session.* Yet in the case of the sickness of the applicant or the impracticability of obtaining a quorum, the applicant may be examined and afterward received by the Session.* If the Elders be dead or removed, a Minister may receive members, who may be recognized by the congregation and elected as officers if such action is by direction of Presbytery.† Persons cannot be received except into the organized church of which any given Session is the governing body.‡

Whom may the Session dismiss?

When any member shall remove from one congregation to another, he shall produce satisfactory testimonials of his church membership and dismission.§ These are to be obtained by application to the Session. It is not illegal for the Session by vote to authorize the Pastor or Clerk to issue letters to those in good standing and report at the next meeting.‖

Those whom the Session find to be in good and regular standing shall be dismissed with regular letters to unite with some other particular church.§ Their names are to be retained on the roll of communicants until the Session is duly notified of their reception by the church to which they were dismissed.‖ Sessions are urged to use the form of certificates prepared by the Board of Publication.¶ In 1869 the O. S. Assembly ordered that certificates should be furnished to removing members, "whether in full communion or members by baptism only, with testimonials of their standing," and that the Session shall send a copy of the testimonials to the

* See p. 127; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 168, 860.
† *Minutes G. A. 1888*, p. 145. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 168.
§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 114. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 801.
¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 800. See p. 149.

church "within the reach of the parties so removed," if there be but a single church of our order near them."* The names of the baptized children of a parent dismissed shall, if they "are members of his household and remove with him, and are not themselves communicants, be included in the certificate of dismissal."†

Those who have been absent for some time from the oversight of the Session may be dismissed with qualified letters; that is, with testimonials as "to their character only up to the time of their removal." "If a church member, more than two years absent from the place of his ordinary residence and church connections, applies for his certificate of membership, his absence and the knowledge of the church respecting his demeanor for that time, or its want of information concerning it, shall be distinctly stated in the certificate."‡ The O. S. Assembly decided that neither the Presbytery nor Synod can, in such a case, order regular certificates to be given, the qualified letters being "agreeable to the constitution and to the truth."§

May a suspended member be dismissed?

A suspended member remains under the jurisdiction of the Session which suspended him: it alone can remove the sentence. Yet the O. S. Assembly decided in 1849 that in circumstances of necessity, arising from removal to an inconvenient distance, a suspended member may be dismissed to another church with a certificate stating the case; "provided, that in no instance the Session to which he be dismissed be allowed to review or rejudge the case."‖ This would empower the Session

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 799.
† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 114.
‡ *Ibid.*, sect. 116.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 666.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 623.

receiving him to restore the offender on repentance. In 1898 the Assembly decided that a letter of dismissal should not be given to a suspended member when there was no evidence of repentance.*

How may a restored member be dismissed?

If the Session restore him, he is of course restored to good and regular standing, and then, if dismissed, he must receive the usual certificate.

If he be restored by a superior court on review, appeal or complaint, he is restored to full membership, and the Session is bound to give him regular letters.†

May a certificate of dismission be indefinite?

The O. S. Assembly in 1853 decided that in some cases the Session may dismiss a member without specifying the church with which he is to unite. But the reunited Church in 1871 urged upon Sessions the importance of giving to members who remove from them either letters of dismission and recommendation to a particular church, or, in case of uncertain destination, letters of credence. The O. S. Assembly in 1869 recommended that the Session should furnish any member removing from their bounds, whether in full communion or member by baptism only, with testimonials of his standing, which should be presented as soon as possible to some church of our connection, and that such person be advised to transfer his relation at the earliest opportunity. The new Book of Discipline require dismissal to a particular church.‡

May members be dismissed to another denomination?

This is often done. The O. S. Assembly in 1839 decided that in such cases "the proper course is to give a certificate of Christian character only." In 1848 this

* *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 95. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 799.
‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 114.

rule was declared to be "neither a censure on the individuals nor the churches to which they seek to be dismissed, but sets forth the only fact which it is important for those churches to know." But in 1851 the O. S. Assembly stated "that the whole subject is one that ought to be left to the sound discretion of the various church Sessions, according to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church."*

Is the Session the only body that may grant a certificate of dismission?

It is a sessional act, yet the Synod has the power to order the Presbytery to issue to a communicant a certificate of dismission from a church; and such certificate was declared by the Assembly to be a valid document.† The case which was the occasion of this decision was peculiar. The Session having repeatedly refused to obey the order of Presbytery to grant a dismissal to one of its members, the Synod ordered the Presbytery to furnish a certificate. The communicant appealed to the Assembly, on the ground that such a certificate was not valid, and would arouse suspicion unless endorsed by the highest authority. Dismissals must be granted at formal meetings of Session.‡ See page 145.

Can members of a dissolved church obtain letters?

A church can be dissolved by Presbytery, even "overruling the wishes of a majority of the members of the said church organization."§ When this is done, it is the duty of the Presbytery to transfer the members to some other church. The N. S. Assembly in 1869 declared that the members of a dissolved church are amenable to Pres-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 798.
† *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 511.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 800.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

bytery for their certificates, their use of them and for their conduct.*

When does dismission take effect?

In 1867 the N. S. Assembly, in answer to this question, said: "A letter of dismission, whether issued to a Ruling Elder or private member, terminates the relations of the person dismissed with the church giving the letter, except so far as said church is responsible for its watch and care over him during the period of transition." "These rights and privileges can be regained in that church by returning the letters of dismission to the authority which gave them."† See page 115.

May a dismission which is irregular be valid?

The O. S. Assembly in 1849 recognized the validity of certificates, while disapproving of the manner in which they were issued.* If the Session be not satisfied with the certificates presented, they may return them to have the informalities corrected before receiving the members. Or if, however, the informalities be not considered of importance, the intention of the Session dismissing being evident, they may be received, subject of course to the review of Presbytery.

What is the form of a regular certificate?

"———, ———, 189-.

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That ——— ——— is a member in good standing of the ——— Presbyterian church of ———, and that" — (with ——— ———, ——— ———, and ——— ———, ———, baptized children‡) "is hereby dismissed at ——— own request, and affectionately recommended to the fellowship of the ——— Presbyterian church of ———,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 797. See p. 115. † *Ibid.*, p. 793.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 114.

and when so received — responsibility to this church will cease.

"By order of the Session,

"———— ————, *Moderator.*"

A note is generally added, stating that the above certificate is valid for one year after its date.*

If the person dismissed be an Elder or Deacon, the certificate should state that "he has for the space of —— years sustained the office of Ruling Elder [or Deacon] to the edification of the church, and enjoyed the fraternal confidence and affection of his brethren in the eldership" [or of its officers].

What is the form of a certificate of reception?

"————, ————, 189–.

"THIS CERTIFIES, That ———— ————, recommended by the Session of the ———— Presbyterian church of ————, was on the ———— day ———— 189–, received as a member in good and regular standing of the ———— Presbyterian church of ————.

Attest: ————

To the Session of————."

What is the form of a qualified certificate of dismission?

"————, ————, 189–.

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That ———— ———— was a member in good standing of the ———— Presbyterian church of ———— until ———— —, 189–, since which date he has been absent from the oversight of the Session. — is hereby dismissed at — own request, and commended to the fellowship of the ———— Presbyterian

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 114.

church of ———, and when so received — responsibility to this church will cease.

"By order of Session,

"———— ————, *Moderator.*"

What is a letter of credence?

It is a letter given to a communicant who is about to travel, or to remove and is unable to state with what particular church he may determine to unite. It is not a letter of dismissal nor does it entitle him to unite with another church. It may be worded thus:

"————, ————, 189–.

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY, THAT ———— ———— is a member of the ——— Presbyterian church of ——— in good standing. As he contemplates spending some ——— in journeying, this letter of credence is given to —, that it may introduce — to the people of God, and facilitate — occasional communion with any church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ among whom — may for the time be sojourning.

"By order of the Session,

"———— ————, *Moderator.*"

May membership be terminated in any other way?

"No member of a church can properly ever cease to be such but by death, exclusion, a regular dismission or an orderly withdrawing to join some other Christian denomination."*

May a member connect himself with another church on profession of faith?

This is disorderly. His church relation cannot be thus

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 802.

ignored or dissolved. He is still under the jurisdiction of the Session, and liable to discipline for attempting to unite with another church. If he has been suspended, he can be restored only on confession and reformation, and not by profession of faith in another church. The N. S. Assembly in 1866 declared that "so soon as the facts in the case are ascertained by the Session of the second church, the proper order of procedure is for this Session, after conference with the accused person, to strike his name from their roll of church-members as not under their jurisdiction, to communicate their action to the Session suspending him, with the reasons for it, and to request the said Session to proceed against him on separate process for duplicity and disorder." *

If the church with which he unites be one of another denomination, the Session may order his name to be struck from the roll of communicants, or may, by process of discipline, suspend him from church privileges.† The N. S. Assembly in 1839 recommended that no other action should be taken than to strike his name from the roll. This action was reaffirmed by the Assemblies of 1879 and 1882, and was in 1884 embodied in the revised Book of Discipline.†

How are absent members to be treated?

"If any communicant, not chargeable with immoral conduct, neglects the ordinances of the church for one year, and in circumstances such as the Session shall regard to be a serious injury to the cause of religion, he may, after affectionate visitation by the Session, and admonition if need be, be suspended from the communion of the church until he gives satisfactory evidence of the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 793.

† *Ibid.*, p. 212; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 52.

sincerity of his repentance, but he shall not be excommunicated without due process of discipline."* Disagreement with the Pastor and diligence in supporting and attending another church are reasons by no means to be received as justifying his absence and his refusal to support the church to which he belongs.†

If a member remove, to reside elsewhere for a number of years or indefinitely, the Session should counsel him to transfer his relation to the church within whose bounds he may be,‡ "and, if he fails so to do, without giving sufficient reason, his name may be placed on the roll of suspended members until he shall satisfy the Session of the propriety of his restoration."§ The Southern Presbyterian Church orders that "if he shall neglect for twelve months, without satisfactory reasons given to both these courts, to transfer his ecclesiastical relation, the court whose bounds he has left shall be required to transfer them. And should that court neglect this duty, the one into whose bounds he has removed shall assume jurisdiction, giving due notice to the other body."‖

If a member be absent for some time, and his residence be unknown to the Session, the Assembly in 1825 required his name to be retained. "If he should ever return or be heard from, he is to be regularly dealt with according to the word of God and the principles of our Church." If the Session has good reason to believe that he "has absented himself with design, either from a disregard of Christian privilege or from a wish to escape from the inspection or discipline of the church, they

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 50. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 666.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 799. § *Book of Discipline*, sect. 49
‖ *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. xv., sect. ii.

ought without unnecessary delay to declare him suspended from the privileges of the church, etc." The N. S. Assembly in 1853 declared that according to the "Book of Discipline," ch. xi., a church member may not absent himself for a longer time than one year from the ordinances "without a forfeiture of his good standing." When one has been absent for years and his residence unknown, the Session should make record of the fact, and declare that he has forfeited his good standing until he returns and accounts for his absence. The O. S. Assembly in 1865 passed a similar order. That body had in 1856 required that the names of absentees, whose whereabouts are unknown, be placed on a reserved list, and not be reported among the communicants until they return and satisfy the Session. The Assembly of the reunited Church ratified the above in 1872 by declaring, "It may nevertheless be well for each church to record on a separate list the names of those who have been absent for more than two years from their church relations, and whose residence is unknown; and the names thus recorded may be omitted in the statistical returns of the church."* The "Book of Discipline" adopted in 1884 authorized the Session to erase the names of absentees after *three* years and place them on the reserved list.†

May a member's name be erased at his request?

The constitution of the Church did not provide for the demission of her members, nor the striking off of names from her roll, save as the result of death or excommunication.‡ The Assembly in 1875 was asked if the Session may grant the request of a member to have his

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 665, 801. See pp. 146, 307.

† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 49. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 666.

connection with the church dissolved on the ground of want of piety or of change in doctrinal belief. The answer given was, that this "would decidedly be irregular and injurious." "There are many sincere persons who, notwithstanding the most persevering efforts to enlighten them, remain ignorant of the best evidences of personal piety, and from despondency or spiritual indolence may desire to have their names dropped from the roll of communicants. Long forbearance should be exercised toward such, and in course of time we may hope that they may become happy in the enjoyment of their privileges. There are, however, some who give painful evidence of the want of spiritual life, and, after diligent efforts to reclaim them, willfully refuse to repent of sin or to put faith in Christ. These should be dealt with in a wise, decided manner. They should be charged with the guilt of impenitence and a breach of their covenant obligations. Their own confessions render useless most of the usual forms of process in cases of outward and scandalous offences, but they should nevertheless be treated as offenders ('Book of Discipline,' ch. i., sect. iii.); and when this is ineffectual to bring them to repentance, they should be in a regular manner suspended from the communion of the Church."*

In 1878 the Assembly was asked, "What shall be done with persons who, after having been, upon examination, received by the Session, conclude that they are not Christians, never come to the Lord's Supper, and request that their names be erased?" The following reply was made: "There are but three ways in which the name of a person can be removed from the roll of a church. These are by death, by dismis-

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 505.

sion to another church and by the administration of discipline. Great forbearance, however, should be exercised toward those whose position has been indicated in the overture. Their unfavorable judgment in regard to themselves may be dependent upon a temporary depression of mind. They should therefore be the subject of earnest prayer and affectionate expostulation, with the hope that they may be brought to the enjoyment of Christian privileges. The application of these general principles, however, must be left to the discretion of the Session."* In 1882 it was "recommended that the names of persons who think themselves mistaken in their convictions be placed on the separate roll of members already provided by the Assembly, in the hope that new light will bring stronger convictions."† The "Book of Discipline" now requires "if a communicant, not chargeable with immoral conduct, inform the Session that he is fully persuaded that he has no right to come to the Lord's table, the Session shall confer with him on the subject, and may, should he continue of the same mind and his attendance on the other means of grace be regular, excuse him from attendance on the Lord's Supper; and, after fully satisfying themselves that his judgment is not the result of mistaken views, shall erase his name from the roll of communicants and make record of their action in the case."‡

How are members received and dismissed in other churches?

In Episcopal churches the whole power of receiving and dismissing members rests in the Pastor or Rector. When he who was baptized in infancy "can say the Creed,

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 58. † *Ibid., 1882*, p. 98.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 48.

the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in other parts of the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose," he is to "be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him;" "which order (of confirmation) is very convenient to be observed, to the end that children, being now come to years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the church, ratify and confirm the same, and also promise that by the grace of God they will evermore themselves faithfully observe such things as they by their own confession have assented unto." It is usual that those applying for confirmation should be under the frequent and special instruction of the Rector for some time before they are presented to the Bishop. Often evidences of regeneration are required. The responsibility in each case is with the Rector, who "shall either bring or send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons within his parish as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed."* Communicants are transferred from one congregation to another by certificates from the Rector. Persons from other denominations are received on application for confirmation, and rebaptism is sometimes recommended.

In the Reformed Episcopal Church adults are baptized on profession of faith and repentance, and all applicants for confirmation must make a similar confession.† "A communicant of another Christian Church in good standing may be received to the communion of this Church on a letter of dismission or other satisfactory evidence, on

* *Common Prayer.*

† *Common Prayer of the Reformed Episcopal Church.*

assenting to the distinctive principles of this Church." And a communicant may "be furnished with a certificate or letter of dismissal to any Christian Church."* The power is with the Rector.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church no one can be received into the Church until he has been on probation at least six months, been recommended by the Leaders and Stewards' Meeting, and has given to the Minister satisfactory assurance of the correctness of his faith and of his willingness to observe the rules of the Church. Persons in good standing in other orthodox churches are received on certificate at once, after giving satisfactory answers to the usual inquiries, to full fellowship.†

In the Congregational Church "persons are admitted to the church by a vote of the brethren." "Credible evidence of piety is a necessary prerequisite to communion and church membership." "If any of their members wish to unite with churches of other evangelical denominations, letters are given to such churches," and members of other churches "are received on certificate as from sister churches."‡ Generally there is a "Prudential Committee," composed of the Pastor and Deacons, to whom application for admission is made. If the applicants are approved by these, they are recommended to the church, and are examined as to their faith and knowledge, and are received by the vote of the brethren and a public assent to the Creed of the Church.

The Baptist churches are congregational in polity.

In the Lutheran Church persons applying for admission "must satisfy the church Council that they have sincerely

* *Canons of Reformed Episcopal Church*, title iii., canon 7.

† *Discipline, 1880*, Part I., ch. ii.

‡ *Congregational Manual*, pp. 7, 11, 14. *Congregationalism*, p. 183.

repented of their sins and truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" they must after instruction be confirmed.*

What is the fourth power of Session?

To administer discipline—"*to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend or exclude from the sacraments, those who are found to deserve censure*" (1 Cor. 11 : 27, to the end; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13, 14; 2 Thess. 3 : 6, 14, 15).†

What is meant by "found to deserve censure"?

Convicted on evidence in a formal trial. Censure upon an absent person, or without a trial, is invalid.‡ The plea of guilty may shorten the trial, but cannot render it unnecessary. Such was the decision of the N. S. Assembly in 1865 in the case of one who voluntarily confessed heretical sentiments and a breach of covenant, and who waived the formality of a trial in order to excommunication from the Church.§ In this decision reference is made to "Book of Discipline," ch. iv. The reasons seem to be, that the Session must judge of the circumstances and degree of guilt before passing judgment, which must always be proportional to the offence,‖ and a full record is necessary for review by the higher courts, and for reference in case of future profession of repentance and reformation. In 1879 the Assembly was asked, "If the accused person, before a committee regularly appointed by the judicatory for private interview, confess guilt and willful persistence in sin, and, afterward appearing before the judicatory upon the first citation, again confesses guilt and willful persistence in sin, may the judicatory proceed to pass their sentence without

* *Formula of Government*, ch. iv., sect. v.
† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 34.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 642, 645.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 666.
‖ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 2.

further process of trial?" The Assembly replied "in the affirmative."* The "Book of Discipline" now orders that "if the plea be 'guilty' the judicatory shall proceed to judgment."† The Southern Presbyterian Church says on confession judgment may be rendered without process, but a full statement of facts must be recorded.‡

How is discipline administered in other churches?

In Episcopal churches the power of discipline is in the hands of the Rector of the church.

In Methodist churches all the communicants are divided into classes. It is the duty of the Class-leaders to inquire how each member observes the rules of the Church and grows in the knowledge and love of God. The Class-leader must report the condition of his class to the monthly meeting of the Pastor, Leaders and Stewards. In case of inconsistent conduct, the offender is reproved and exhorted by his Class-leader. If there be no reformation, he is visited by the Pastor, his Leader and two or three members. If he will not hear these, charges are presented to the Pastor, who appoints a committee of communicants to try him and pronounce sentence. A probationer is dropped from the roll without process, by a decision of the Leaders and Stewards' meeting.§

In Congregational churches "unworthy members are also excluded by the same power"—the vote of the brethren. "If a member be convinced that he is not truly regenerate, . . . and shall request a dissolution of his connection with the church, if there be no scandal in his life requiring discipline, his request shall be granted,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 660. † *Book of Discipline*, sect. 22.
‡ *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. xii., sect i.
§ *Discipline, 1880*, ¶¶ 57, 223–239.

after due labor first used, by a simple vote declarative of the facts, which vote shall be publicly announced at the next communion season." *

In the Lutheran Church the discipline of communicants is administered by the church Council.†

What is the fifth power of Session mentioned?

"*To concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interest of the congregation.*" This includes (1) sessional visitations and whatever may promote the orderly lives of church members or the unity of the congregation; (2) the charge of the worship, maintaining the means of grace, church services, prayer-meetings, Sabbath-schools, mission-stations, the music of the church, etc; (3) the activities of the members in mission operations, care of the poor and making contributions; (4) the conducting of congregational meetings for the election of Pastor, Elders and Deacons, and for other purposes.

How are sessional visitations to be conducted?

The Session must determine how, in the peculiar circumstances of each church and of each individual, these visitations can be conducted best for edification. The old custom, of appointing a special season in which the whole congregation shall be visited, has proved to be very beneficial. Committees of two or more Elders are often appointed to visit, with the Pastor, every family, and to minister, as may be found necessary, to the spiritual needs of each. Often the whole congregation is divided into districts, and each committed to the special charge of certain Elders, who should keep the Session and Pastor informed as to the condition of all under their care. Be-

* *Congregational Manual*, pp. 7, 21; *Congregationalism*, p. 188.

† *Formula of Government*, ch. iv., sect. viii.

sides this general visitation, there must always be more frequent and special visits made to (1) the baptized members of the church, especially when they come to years of discretion; (2) those persons under conviction of sin or spiritual distress; (3) the sick; (4) the afflicted. Sessions are to take the most effectual methods to discountenance all ostentatious and expensive parades and the old custom of using spirituous liquors at funerals.* (5) To the poor; (6) the tempted; and (7) those guilty of offence and under suspension.†

VII. What control has the Session over the worship?

"*Subject to the provisions of the Directory for Worship the Session shall have and exercise exclusive authority over the worship of the congregation, including the musical service, and shall determine the times and places of preaching the Word and all other religious services. They shall also have exclusive authority over the uses to which the church buildings may be put, but may temporarily delegate the determination of such uses to the body having management of the temporal affairs of the church, subject to the superior authority and direction of the Session.*"‡

What relation has the Session to the Sabbath-schools?

In 1877 the Assembly reaffirmed the deliverances of the two branches of the Church. (1) The Pastor and Session must direct the whole spiritual training of the young. (2) The Pastor in supervising the Sabbath-school should be frequently present, hold special meetings for the children and preach to them. (3) The Session should deter-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 869.

† *Directory for Worship*, chs. x., xi., xiii., xiv.

‡ *Minutes G. A., 1898*, p. 97.

mine the text-books and lesson-papers and helps to be used, and should carefully examine every book admitted into the library. The publications of our own Board are specially recommended. (4) The Bible should be "the great text-book." The "Shorter Catechism" should be carefully taught, that the doctrine and polity of the Church may be fixed in the memory. (5) The statistical reports of the Sabbath-schools should be regularly furnished to Presbytery and embodied in the Assembly's Minutes. (6) It is desirable that the whole congregation should be connected with the Sabbath-schools, as teachers or scholars. In 1878 the Assembly issued a pastoral letter to the Sessions on this subject, specially urging the importance of sound doctrinal teaching, and recommending the question-books, papers, Catechisms and the standards of doctrine, polity and worship published by the Board of Publication.* In the same year the Assembly "recommended that in all our Sabbath-schools superintendents be chosen or appointed subject to the approval of the church Session;" "that the Pastor and Session visit, encourage, and if need be work in, the Sabbath-school."* In 1882 "the Assembly earnestly recommended the Sessions of all our churches, in the exercise of their right, to appoint the Superintendent, and maintain a careful and authoritative supervision of all the Sabbath-school work of their congregations and mission enterprises."* In 1883 "the General Assembly again emphasized the duty of the church Session to exercise supervision over their Sabbath-schools, especially in the choice of officers and teachers."* In the following year "Pastors and Ses-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 826-831.

sions were urged to supervise more carefully their Sabbath-school work, to encourage in every way the thorough preparation of teachers, to secure as far as possible the attendance of the children upon the services of the church, to steadily aim at their early conversion to Christ and their intelligent attachment to the Church of their fathers."* The Assemblies continue to emphasize the importance of the supervision of the Sabbath-school work, the selection of the officers and teachers, the direction of the benevolence, and the general conduct of the school by the Session. Presbyterian polity should be taught in the Sabbath-schools.† The Session have the direction of the music of the Sabbath-school as well as of that of the church.‡ In 1878 the Assembly referred to the favorable consideration of the Board of Publication an overture praying "to initiate measures for securing unobjectionable hymns and the choicest music for Sabbath-school use." In 1882 the Board of Publication was directed to prepare a hymn-book for the Sabbath-school and for meetings for social prayer.§ The Westminister Sabbath-school Hymns was published in 1883. The Chapel Hymnal appeared in 1898, and one for the Sabbath-school is nearly ready for publication. In 1882 Pastors and Sessions were "urgently requested to maintain a careful supervision of the objects for which collections are made in the Sabbath-schools, and to secure their contributions to our own benevolent causes, giving due prominence to the Sabbath-school work of this Board" (Publication).‖

Concerning Young People's Societies see page 573.

What control has the Session over collections?

See pp. 63, 64, 70 and 111.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 827–831. † *Ibid.*, p. 827. ‡ See p. 76.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 837. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

What power has the Session over the congregation?

It can, whenever it judges it advisable, call a meeting of the congregation and propose the business to be considered. The Moderator of the Session presides in virtue of his office.* His decisions can only be overruled by an appeal to Presbytery. If an Elder preside,† an appeal can be taken to the Session.‡ The Clerk of Session must be the clerk, and shall keep a full record in a book provided for that purpose. "All proceedings of the church shall be reported to and reviewed by the Session, and by its order incorporated with its records."§ This is mandatory. The proceedings "shall be incorporated in the Sessional Records in such a manner and to such an extent only as will faithfully exhibit the action taken." This applies also to the action of Trustees in certain cases.‖ Appeals, protests and complaints must be brought before the Session.‡ Concerning other congregational meetings, see p. 39.

When must the Session call a congregational meeting?

Whenever the Session judges it advisable, or "when a majority of the persons entitled to vote in the case shall by petition request that a meeting shall be called."¶

Can the Session refuse to call such meetings?

It must act according to its judgment, subject in this as in all things to Presbytery. The matter may come before Presbytery on review or by petition or complaint from members of the congregation.¶

For what purposes may it call congregational meetings?

(1) To Elect Elders and Deacons.** The Session may

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 526. † See p. 131.

‡ *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, pp. 40, 41.

§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 71. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 678.

¶ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. i.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 526.

** *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. ii.

nominate candidates, but this must not interfere with the liberty of choice. Elders can only be elected at a meeting called by the Session or by a higher judicatory.* Only communicants can vote.†

(2) To elect a Pastor.‡ All communicants can vote, and also non-communicants who contribute to the support of the Pastor, except where the charter of the church or the usage of the congregation confines the right of voting to the communicants.§ A Minister of the Presbytery shall preside, or, if very inconvenient to obtain one, a member of the Session may do so.‖ If the meeting proceed contrary to the judgment of Session, appeal may be made to the Presbytery; or the congregation, with the concurrence of Session, may refer the matter to Presbytery for advice or final decision.¶

(3) To consider the desire of the Pastor to resign his charge. This may be at the Pastor's request that the congregation join him in a petition to Presbytery, or to appoint commissioners to answer the citation of Presbytery which is about to consider the Pastor's resignation. Or such a meeting may be called by the Session on its own motion or when properly requested to do so, when the congregation shall have labored under such grievances as that they shall desire to be released from their Pastor.**

(4) For anything pertaining to the spiritual interests of the church. Communicants have the right to vote, and contributors whenever money-matters are involved,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 525. † See p. 56.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. i. See p. 365.

§ *Ibid.*, ch. xv., sect. iv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 563.

‖ See p. 129.

¶ *Manual of Law and Usage*, p. 41; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 79.

** See p. 404. *Form of Government*, ch. xvii.

unless the charter or usage of the congregation confine the right to communicants.*

What is the sixth power of Session mentioned?

"*And to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the Church;*" that is, to the Presbytery and Synod.† (except when the Synod is composed of Presbyterial delegates).‡ The Pastors and Ministers are by ordination members of Presbytery and Synod. The Session selects an Elder as delegate to attend each meeting of these higher courts. In regard to delegates to special or adjourned meetings of these judicatories, see pp. 185, 249.

Is it optional with the Session to appoint delegates?

No; it is a duty. The people have a right to be represented in all the courts of the Church,§ which need the presence of the Elders, and which should censure the Session if they have neglected to make the appointment, or require the Session to censure the delegate for his neglect of duty, in lateness, in withdrawing without leave or in absence. The O. S. Assembly in 1859 reproved a Synod because "the Ruling Elders were not called upon for reasons of absence, as in the case of Teaching Elders."‖ In 1840 the N. S. Assembly found fault with a Synod for "censuring" (an Elder) "at their bar in a way competent in any circumstances only to the Session of the church, to which he was primarily amenable."¶

Whom may the Session appoint as delegate?

Any of the Elders, members of its own body. Those churches which have adopted the "term-elder-

* *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, p. 39.
† *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. ii.; ch. xi., sect. i.
‡ *Ibid.*, ch. xi., sect. i. See p. 242.
§ *Ibid.*, ch. x., sect. iii.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 176.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

ship" may appoint an Elder whose term of service has expired.*

VIII. Who has power to convene the Session?

"*The Pastor has power to convene the Session when he may judge it requisite, and he shall always convene them when requested to do so by any two of the Elders. The Session shall also convene when directed to do so by the Presbytery.*" The Session is recommended to hold monthly meetings.†

Are the meetings of Session open or private?

All the judicatories of the Church hold open meetings, yet they "have a right to sit in private on business which in their judgment ought not to be matter of public speculation." "Besides the right to sit judicially in private," etc.‡ In 1879 the Assembly was requested to order that "in all cases of accusation against a Minister or Ruling Elder, the Presbytery" (or Session) "consider carefully at the opening of the case the question of the propriety of exercising its constitutional right to sit with closed doors, admitting, besides the witnesses and parties necessarily present, only such persons as they may deem necessary to give proper publicity to the proceedings." No action was taken further than to refer the paper to the favorable consideration of the committee to revise our "Book of Discipline."§ But the next year an overture was presented in regard to the disorder often occasioned at ecclesiastical trials by the presence of large numbers of spectators, and it was resolved "that the General Assembly recommend to its subordinate judicatories that, before entering upon

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. viii.
† *Minutes G. A. 1890*, p. 132.
‡ See p. 537.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 615.

judicial process, they carefully determine what degree of privacy or publicity in the proceedings would be most conducive to the ends of justice, the peace of the Church and the spiritual benefit of the person tried." At any stage of judicial process, "the judicatory may determine by a vote of two thirds to sit with closed doors.*

What is an interlocutory meeting?

"All judicatories have a right to hold what are commonly called 'interlocutory meetings,' in which members freely converse together, without the formalities which are usually necessary in judicial proceedings."†

Can a Session invite corresponding members?

The constitution makes no provision for corresponding members in Session. The N. S. Assembly in 1851 decided that even a Minister of the same Presbytery or Synod could not be invited to sit in Session as a corresponding member, nor could he be assigned as counsel to an accused person.‡ A retired Elder, or one whose term has expired, has no jurisdiction until re-elected and installed. He may of course be present at any open meeting, give advice when asked, but can have no right to speak on resolutions or vote or act as counsel.§

IX. May the Session appoint a clerk?

"Every judicatory shall choose a Clerk to record their transactions, whose continuance shall be during pleasure. It shall be the duty of the Clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required."‖

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 23; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 31.
† *General Rules for Judicatories*, xxxix.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 654. See pp. 240, 250.
§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 26.
‖ *Form of Government*, ch. xx.

Who is the Clerk of Session?

The Session may appoint its own Clerk. A judicatory may select any convenient person, though not a member, to keep its records and perform all the duties of a clerk.* This had been in 1793 decided to be proper in regard to the Clerk of the General Assembly. It is evident that the Clerk should be under the jurisdiction or authority of the court, as he has charge of the records. In small Sessions the Pastor frequently acts as Moderator and Clerk; there is no impropriety in this. In larger Sessions an Elder usually is appointed. In judicial business, when considerable testimony is to be recorded, it may be desirable, as it is allowable, to appoint a temporary clerk, as in the higher courts.

What are the duties of the Clerk?

(1) "*Every Session shall keep a fair record of its proceedings, which record shall be at least once every year submitted to the inspection of the Presbytery.*" (2) The Clerk shall "preserve the records carefully." This includes the care of all the papers and books pertaining to the business of Session and the registers referred to on p. 174; (3) he shall "grant extracts from the records whenever properly required," (4) make authenticated copies of judicial cases when these are needed, and prepare all necessary papers in cases of reference, appeal or complaint; (5) he shall issue certificates and citations by order of Session; (6) he shall prepare the statistical reports for Presbytery; (7) he shall keep a fair record of the proceedings of all congregational meetings called by the Session.†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 586.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xx.; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 63. See p. 165.

Should the record be full?

The record should be full, especially in judicial cases, including the testimony of witnesses. "The charge and specifications, the plea and the judgment shall be entered on the minutes of the judicatory. The minutes shall also exhibit all the acts and orders of the judicatory relating to the case, with the reasons therefor, together with the notice of appeal and the reasons therefor, if any shall have been filed; all which, together with the evidence in the case duly filed and authenticated by the clerk of the judicatory, shall constitute the record of the case."* The N. S. Assembly in 1862 declared that the testimony of witnesses must be recorded "on the book of permanent records."† Files are liable to be lost.

How shall extracts of the record given by the Clerk be regarded?

They should be certified by him as true copies of the record, and "such extracts, under the hand of the Clerk, shall be considered as authentic vouchers of the fact which they declare, in any ecclesiastical judicatory, and to every part of the Church."‡ If they have been printed and are certified by the Clerk, they shall be considered as authentic, and the distribution of the printed form among the members of the higher court in a judicial case may, by mutual consent, be accepted in place of the reading of the record in whole or in part.§

To whom may the Clerk give extracts?

The records are the property of the Session, and the

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 24; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 246, 653.

† *Ibid.*, p. 173.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xx.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 747. See p. 195.

extracts can only be given by the order of Session. The parties in a judicial case shall be allowed copies of the whole proceedings, at their own expense, if they demand them.* In 1879 the Assembly was asked if "a Minister once suspended, but afterward restored, may demand that the records in his case be closed to inspection or transcript, when required by subsequent judicial proceedings by his own Presbytery?" The reply given was: "The records of our church courts are public, and not private, documents, and therefore no one who has been under discipline can demand that anything pertaining to his case shall be closed to inspection or transcript. Yet a wise Christian charity would suggest that when the end of discipline in the restoration of an offender has been reached, no further publicity, if possible, should be given to the matter." †

How often must the records be submitted to Presbytery?

At least once each year. "And if any lower judicatory shall omit to send up its records for this purpose, the higher may require them to be produced, either immediately or at a specified time as circumstances may determine." ‡ Copies of the record, attested, were accepted in 1790 in place of the originals when it was inconvenient to send the books. The O. S. Assembly in 1841 rescinded the permission, and in 1847 refused to receive attested copies in place of the original records.§ So did the Assembly in 1878.

In what respects must the records be examined?

In reviewing the records of an inferior judicatory

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 29.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 656.
‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 71; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 678.
§ *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 656.

it is proper to examine, first, whether the proceedings have been constitutional and regular; secondly, whether they have been wise, equitable and for the edification of the Church; thirdly, whether they have been correctly recorded. If everything is satisfactory, the records are by order of Presbytery approved as far as written, and signed by the Moderator. If anything is found out of order, the minutes are approved with exceptions "by simply placing on its own (the Presbytery's) records, and on those under review, the censure which it may pass. But irregular proceedings may be found so disreputable and injurious that the inferior judicatory must be required to review and correct, or reverse them, and report, within a specified time, its obedience to the order; *provided*, however, that no judicial decision shall be reversed, unless regularly taken up by appeal or complaint."*

What effect has the approval of the records?

After approval by Presbytery the records cannot be altered or annulled by the Session. If an error is found, it can be corrected only "by an application to the highest court that has endorsed the mistake." So the N. S. Assembly decided in 1862.† In 1878 the Assembly disapproved of a lower court correcting its record after the endorsement of a higher. In 1880 a Synod received permission to correct its records.† The O. S. Assembly in 1841 sustained the decision of the Moderator that the records of a lower court having been approved, the approval cannot be amended, being a minute recording a fact, but by a unanimous vote of the house. The higher court may give permission to correct the records.†

* *Book of Discipline*, sects. 72, 74. See p. 229.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 680.

In 1879 the Assembly declared that "the constituted right of appeal 'either from a part of the proceedings of a judicatory or from a definite sentence,' and the right of complaint 'respecting a decision by an inferior judicatory,' 'either before its rising or within ten days thereafter,' cannot be in any way affected by the approval of the minutes of the judicatory against the action of which the appeal or complaint may be taken." *

X. What registers must the Session keep?

"*It is important that every Session keep a fair register of marriages; of baptisms, with the time of the birth of the individuals baptized; of persons admitted to the Lord's table; and of the deaths, and other removals of church members;*" of those under church discipline; † of absent members (reserved list)‡ and of baptized members. In 1881 the Assembly directed "church Sessions to exercise greater care in preserving accurate rolls of their baptized children who are not communicants." § And in 1882 "churches are urged to keep a full and permanent roll of all baptized children, and carefully to note their public confession of Christ, their passing beyond the watch and care of the Church, or their removal by death." § These registers are kept by the Pastor or Clerk.

What reports must the Session prepare?

(1) An annual narrative of the state of religion, to be presented to Presbytery, generally at the spring stated meeting; (2) a similar narrative to be presented at the annual meeting of Synod, which is generally held in

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 687.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sect. iii. ‡ See p. 154.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 175.

the autumn. These should each be the narrative for a whole year, the one of the presbyterial year, and the other of the synodical year, the Board of Publication to furnish blanks.* In 1884 a committee was appointed "to prepare an outline of topics, with appropriate questions or suggestions, to serve as a basis for church narratives." The report was entitled "Inquiries for the guidance of Church Sessions in preparing their Annual Narratives of the State of Religion." These were revised in 1895 and 1897. Forty-one questions are arranged under the following topics: I. Congregational Services; II. Sabbath-schools; III. Societies of Men, of Women, Young Peoples' Societies' Reports; IV. Spiritual Conditions; V. Benevolence; VI. Family Religion, and VII. Miscellaneous. These questions were ordered to be printed and distributed among the churches.† (3) The statistical report to Presbytery, to be transmitted to the General Assembly. This should be presented at the spring meeting, and should include—numbers of Elders and Deacons, number added on examination and on certificate, number dismissed, dropped, and deceased, whole number of communicants, adult baptisms, infant baptisms, Sabbath-school membership, the amount contributed to the nine causes recommended by the General Assembly, to the General Assembly's expenses, to congregational purposes, and to miscellaneous objects; the value of boxes sent should be included.‡

The blanks are furnished to the Sessions. In 1885 the Assembly directed that the Board of Publication in printing blanks "submit them to the approval of that officer of the Church who is responsible for the same,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 175. † *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 121.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1897*, pp. 139, 140.

and in particular that the blanks for congregational and presbyterial statistics be approved by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly."* These reports should all be formally adopted by the Session, and engrossed on the records as part of the minutes of Session. This is implied in the recommendation of the Assembly to Presbyteries and Synods in 1892.† In 1869 the N. S. Assembly ordered that the statistical report should contain only the actual membership—that the utmost care should be taken to clear the register of all deceased, dismissed and lost members.‡ The O. S. Assembly in 1856 also ordered the omission of all absent members whose residences are unknown. Their names should be put on a reserve list, and not counted in the statistical report.§ This was ratified in 1872. The "Book of Discipline" requires that "a separate roll of such names shall be kept."‖

How must the meetings of Session be opened and closed?

They should always be opened and closed with prayer. This fact should be stated on the records.¶ The opening prayer may properly be omitted after a divine service.¶ If so, it should be recorded. In 1884 the Assembly reiterated the action of 1877. "While we have no law requiring the closing of the sessions of the church Session with prayer, yet by the deliverances of the past General Assemblies the omission to close any session of any of the judicatories of the Church with prayer has been pronounced out of harmony with the 'Form of Government;' but a recess does not imply

* *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 625.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 224.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 801.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 665.
‖ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 49. See pp. 152–154.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

the close of a Session." * Yet the Session has discretion, especially when the meeting follows a divine service.* Informal meetings, however, are often held.†

What is the lowest judicatory of other churches called?

Neither the Episcopal nor the Congregational Church has any judicatory in the particular church. In the former the Priest exercises discipline, and in the latter the church itself, though often according to the advice of a Prudential Committee. In regard to the Methodist Church see p. 160. In the Lutheran Church the church Council corresponds with our Session, as does the Consistory in the Reformed (Dutch) Church.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE PRESBYTERY.

I. Should separate congregations have a bond of union?

Christ regarded it important (John 10 : 16), and he prayed for it (John 17 : 20, 21). He did not expect nor aim to bring all his sheep into one flock, nor did he pray that all who should believe on him should be in one place on earth, but he labored and prayed that all might be under one Shepherd, and one with him and with each other, in love and under government. The Apostles taught the necessity of the unity of the churches, their mutual dependence, and the subjection of all to the Epistles, whether general or addressed to the churches in certain cities. "The church of Jerusalem consisted of more than one (congrega-

* *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. xi.; ch. xi., sect. v.; and ch. xii., sect. viii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 161. † See p. 129.

tion), as is manifest both before and after the dispersion, from Acts 6 : 1, 6 ; 9 : 31 ; 21 : 20 ; 2 : 41, 46, 47 ; and 4 : 4. These congregations were under one presbyterial government, proved from Acts 15 : 4; 11 : 22, 30; 21 : 17, 18 ; 6 : That the church of Ephesus had more congregations than one, under a presbyterial government, appears from Acts 19 : 18, 19, 20 ; 1 Cor. 16 : 8, 9, 19, compared with Acts 18 : 19, 24, 26 ; 20 : 17, 18, 25, 28, 30, 31, 36, 37 ; Rev. 2 : 1–6." *

All branches of the Christian Church have felt the necessity, and have established some bond of union for mutual counsel and assistance.

What is the first object of such a union?

"*To preserve soundness of doctrine.*" Individual members and churches often adopt errors, and if isolated these errors become confirmed and lead to other perversions of truth. If each church may adopt or change its creed at pleasure, there can be no uniformity of faith nor certainty of truth. If, however, churches are bound together by a definite form of government, their mutual oversight and zeal for the truth will detect errors, repudiate heresies, define and defend sound doctrine and silence false teachers.

What is the second object of this union?

"*To preserve regularity of discipline.*" Uniformity of discipline is very important. What one church allows ought not to be condemned by another. There should be the same terms of communion, the same rules for judging the outward conduct of members, and the same methods of convicting and restoring offenders. There should be some means of correcting the misapplication of discipline. This can only be accomplished by a real union.

* *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. i., note.

What is the third object of this union?

"*To enter into common measures for promoting knowledge and religion, and for preventing infidelity, error and immorality,*" such as an educated ministry, religious publications, extension of the Church at home and abroad, general education and morality. The churches have a responsibility concerning not only their own members, but also the condition of the world without, in which different forms of infidelity and immorality are constantly reappearing. To oppose these the individual churches can do but little, and their efforts would often prove fruitless, because conflicting. Concerted action and a united testimony for the truth and against errors and iniquity accomplish much.

Are these objects accomplished by presbyterial and synodical assemblies?

"*Hence arise the importance and usefulness of presbyterial and synodical assemblies.*" For any errors in doctrine or irregularities in discipline in particular churches are discovered and corrected by the higher courts; which, having a general supervision, can also determine all matters concerning the churches and the influence to be exerted on the community at large.*

What is the bond of union in the Roman Catholic Church?

The Pope—the recognition of and submission to the Pope as the infallible head of the Church, the vicegerent of Christ on earth, who claims absolute authority, temporal and spiritual. The scriptural warrant for this is said to be Christ's charge to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church;" "and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatso-

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 71.

ever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shalt be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16 : 18, 19). But in Eph. 2 : 20, 21, Rev. 21 : 14; 1 Cor. 3 : 11, and elsewhere, the Church is said to be built equally on all the Apostles, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." In Matt. 18 : 18 the same power of the keys, to bind and loose, is given alike to all the Twelve. And in no case does Peter assume superiority over the Apostles in the Christian Church. He did not even preside over the church at Jerusalem, nor over the Presbytery or Synod described in Acts 15.

What is the bond of union in the Episcopal Church?

Bishops, as the successors of the Apostles, having authority, each over the other clergy, the laity and the churches in his separate diocese, and as a body over the whole Church. The scriptural authority cited is the calling of the Apostles (Luke 6 : 13), the charge given to them (Matt. 28 : 19), the authority exercised by them (Acts 20 : 17), and the appointment of successors (Acts 1 : 16–26). The evident answer to this is—(1) that the apostolate was designed to be a temporary office;* (2) that at the time Christ gave his charge to the Apostles they represented the whole Church, and his charge was therefore to the Church; the authority he then gave was to be exercised for a time by these extraordinary officers, but permanently by the regular officers and courts of the Church; (3) that while the Apostles did possess universal and absolute authority for the organization of the Christian Church, it was because of their peculiar relation to Christ, their inspiration and their miraculous gifts, which were only temporary. But the powers needed permanently in the Church they exercised only together with the

* See p. 42.

permanent officers and courts. (4) They had no successors. Matthias was not a successor of Judas, but was substituted for that false Apostle. Paul, as "one born out of due time," was not a successor to any, but made the Apostle to the Gentiles (1 Cor. 15 : 8). Their peculiar gifts have ceased.* No provision for successors was made in the Scriptures, nor were qualifications given. Nor, in fact, have any since exercised the authority or performed the work of Apostles as described in the Scriptures.

What is the bond of union in the Methodist churches?

In the Methodist Church the bond of union is found in the Conferences, General, Annual and Quarterly.†

What is the bond of union in the Congregational Church?

In the Congregational Church fellowship between individual churches is expressed by Councils, which are called in cases of importance or difficulty for sympathy, advice and co-operation.‡ The church calling the Council may invite as many or as few churches as it deems best, and may adopt or reject the advice given. Some Congregational churches are consociated; that is, they mutually agree to call upon those thus associated whenever any matter of importance is presented to any one church. These Consociations, though resembling Presbyteries, possess no power nor supervision. The advice given should be followed as long as the church remains in the Consociation; the right to withdraw at any moment is recognized.

II. Of whom does the Presbytery consist?

"*A Presbytery consists of all the Ministers, in number not less than five, and one Ruling Elder from each con-*

* See p. 43.

† *Discipline*, 1880, ¶ 63–101.

‡ *Congregational Manual*, pp. 10, 20; *Congregationalism*, p. 3.

gregation, within a certain district." It may be formed without any organized churches, but must have a definite territory.* All churches and missionary operations within the bounds of the Presbytery must be under its care and government. This is true also in regard to Ministers. Yet Ministers coming within the bounds of a Presbytery can become members only by regular letters of dismissal from the Presbyteries to which they formerly belonged. If a Minister reside within one Presbytery and labor in another, he should unite with the latter. The Presbytery must judge in each case if there be sufficient cause to justify the membership of those who live beyond its geographical limits. In 1870 and 1872 the Assembly declared that "Ministers without charge are required to unite with that Presbytery within the geographical limits of which they ordinarily reside or are nearest to, and to which they shall be amenable for the proper discharge of their ordination engagements."†

Can two Presbyteries occupy the same ground?

No. It would be contrary both to the letter and spirit of our constitution and the teaching of the word of God. In 1873 the Assembly decided that no distinction can be made "of race or color or language to interfere with the unity and simplicity of that oversight which the constitution of this Church requires."‡

What are "elective-affinity" courts?

"Judicatories not bounded by geographical limits, but having a chief regard in their erection to diversities of doctrinal belief and of ecclesiastical polity." These are inconsistent with our "Form of Church Government,"

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 177, 179. † *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 182.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 179; *Minutes G. A. 1888*, p. 73; *1889*, p. 69.

and would "open a wide door for mischiefs and abuses of the most serious kind," destroying the unity of the Church, purity of doctrine, uniformity of discipline and the peace of the churches.*

May a Presbytery consist of less than five Ministers?

Five are necessary even on missionary ground where four or more churches have been organized.* In 1877 a delegate was received by the Assembly whose commission was regular in form, but his Presbytery had fallen below the constitutional number of five Ministers. The Assembly resolved that the constitution "does not contemplate the dissolution of Presbyteries previously organized in remote and isolated regions with less than five members;" "that the General Assembly is disposed to excuse remote and isolated Presbyteries from strict compliance with certain general rules, when it shall appear that every reasonable effort has been made to comply with said rules."*

Are Ministers without charge members of Presbytery?

In Scotland they are under the care of Presbytery, are responsible to it, have a seat, and may speak on any resolution, but have no vote.

"According to the constitution of our Church, Ministers, as such, whether with or without charge, are of equal power and privilege. If the defection of any Minister from the duties implied in his ordination vows is serious enough to disfranchise him, it is sufficiently serious to call for the orderly exercise of discipline." This is the language of the O. S. Assembly of 1859; it expressed the decision of the Assemblies of 1802, 1816 and 1835.†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 178; *Minutes G. A. 1887*, p. 25.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 181, 209; *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 130.

Must the Presbyteries have geographical bounds?

In 1834 the Assembly decided that this ought to be so, "except in very extraordinary cases."* At the reunion in 1869 the Assembly determined the bounds of thirty-four Synods, and required each of these to hold a special meeting to divide its allotted territory into certain districts and consign them to Presbyteries.† The bounds of Presbytery can be changed by Synod after approval by the Presbyteries interested. If the proposed change affects the boundaries of Synods, those Synods must be consulted and the matter referred to the General Assembly.‡ The Assembly may change the bounds of Presbytery.§

What are union Presbyteries?

They are formed in foreign fields jointly occupied by organizations holding Presbyterian doctrine and polity. They prepare the way for the organization of national churches. These are encouraged, and our missionaries are urged to unite with them. In doing so they do not lose claim on the Board of Relief.‖ Their names and addresses are published in the Assembly's Minutes. These Presbyteries may be represented by advisory members in our Assembly.¶

How are the churches represented in Presbytery?

"*One Ruling Elder from each congregation.*" The Session should appoint a delegate and an alternate for each meeting, whether regular or special, of the Presbytery, that the church may certainly be represented. It is the custom of some Sessions to appoint a delegate to serve for three or more months. There is nothing in the constitution to forbid this. An alternate may take the place of the principal at an adjourned meeting.** But when

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 179. † *Ibid.*, p. 229. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 303.
§ See p. 273. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 180; *Minutes G. A. 1887*, pp. 19, 24, 140. ¶ See p. 265. ** *Minutes G. A. 1886*, p. 110.

a church has adopted the rotary eldership, those Elders whose term of service has expired may be appointed by the Session delegates to Presbytery and Synod.* In Scotland a Minister without charge or an Elder of another church may be appointed by the Session to represent them in the higher judicatories. But according to our constitution the delegate to Presbytery must be an Elder of the church which he represents. The same delegate must be sent to an adjourned meeting of Presbytery who was present at the stated meeting, especially when the business partly considered is to be continued at the adjourned meeting.† In 1878 the Assembly was asked, If a delegate to Synod could represent his Session at an adjourned meeting of the Presbytery held during the intervals of the sessions of Synod? and may the Session appoint him delegate to Synod and to an adjourned meeting of Presbytery? The reply was: "No rule is laid down in our standards as to the particular term or time of service of delegates appointed by church Sessions to the higher judicatories of the Church." "It is left to each Session to prescribe the particular terms for which, or times at which, its delegates shall attend as its representatives in such judicatories. Under this view the first branch of the overture is answered in the negative, but the questions involved in both branches are subject in each individual case to the control of each Session."‡

If the delegate fail to appear, the Presbytery should call the Session to account for not appointing a delegate, or order it to inquire concerning the absence of the Elder or Elders appointed, and to pass censure if needed.§

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. viii.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 593. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 244. See p. 167.

III. How many Elders may the Session send to Presbytery?

The previous section entitles every congregation to be represented by one Elder, the principle being that there shall be an equal number of Ministers and Ruling Elders in our judicatories. If a church has more than one Pastor, the church may send "*two or more Elders, in proportion to the number of its Pastors.*"* The application of this general principle would seem to require that when a church has two Pastors, one of whom is aged and infirm, but unable to attend the Presbytery, the Session can send only one Elder. "The term '*collegiate church*' is used in two senses—first, of a church with more than one Pastor; second, of two or more churches united under the care of one Pastor."* To these may be added a third: "a church which is united with others under the joint pastorate of several Ministers."* In any such case the number of Elders sent to Presbytery is determined by the number of its Pastors.

IV. How are two or more congregations united under one Pastor to be represented?

"*By one Elder,*" and for the same reason as above.* In such cases the Sessions of the several churches should alternate in electing a delegate to Presbytery. If these churches belong to different Presbyteries, they, while under one Pastor, shall belong to the Presbytery with which the Minister is connected, and be only there represented. When such pastoral relation ceases, the churches must return to their former Presbyteries.† This was reiterated in 1874.† If the Minister has been installed over one church, and acts as Stated Supply of another, he is

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 183.
† *Ibid.*, p. 184.

not the Pastor of the latter;* and therefore both churches have a right to be represented.†

In our large cities a church will often sustain one or more missionary chapels. These frequently have no church organization, but form a part of the parent church, and are subject to its Session. They may have their own Pastors, who are appointed by the Session of the parent church, which also determines who may be admitted to the sacraments administered in the chapels. Those worshiping there have no voice in the temporal or spiritual affairs of the chapels, nor do they vote in the business-meetings of the church. They are without discipline, except the pastoral oversight of their own Ministers, for the members of the Session do not know them and have no supervision. The chapel congregations can have no representation in Presbytery. These chapels are not, therefore, established according to Presbyterian principles, and should be temporary, preparatory to full organization; or they should be permitted at once to elect Elders and be recognized as mission churches, supervised and aided by the parent church or by the Board of Missions, and be represented in Presbytery. These chapels are reported in the statistical column in the minutes separately underneath the report of the parent church.‡

V. How are vacant churches to be represented?

A vacant church is one which has no Pastor duly installed over it. It may have a Stated Supply, who may have served them for several years (an evil to be discountenanced, and terminated as soon as practicable),§ or it may, with other churches, be statedly ministered unto by a domestic Missionary without installation. In either

* See p. 48.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 183.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1891*, p. 187.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 146.

case the church is vacant, and is entitled to representation in Presbytery by an Elder. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1860.* The reasons are (1) that the Stated Supply or Missionary, as such, has neither authority nor seat in the Session;† (2) that every congregation has a right to representation;‡ and (3) while vacant they have special need of the oversight and care of Presbytery. This rule is evidently right, yet at times may give a domestic Missionary or the Elders of feeble churches an undue influence in Presbytery. The evil, however, is practically counteracted by the fact that Ministers are almost always more numerous than the Elders in the meeting of that body, and every act must be reviewed by the higher courts.

VI. How are Elders to be accredited?

"*Every Elder not known to the Presbytery shall produce a certificate of his regular appointment from the church which he represents.*"

VII. What is a quorum of Presbytery?

"*Any three Ministers, and as many Elders as may be present, belonging to the Presbytery, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business.*"

If no Elder be present, the three Ministers form a quorum. Such was the decision of the O. S. Assembly in 1843 and 1844, and was defended on the ground "that Ministers are not only preachers of the gospel and administrators of sealing ordinances, but also Ruling Elders in the very nature of the office," and that the absence of Elders "does not prevent the Presbytery from constituting and transacting business," since the churches had the right to send delegates to take part in all acts of

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 185. † See p. 130. ‡ See p. 184

government and discipline.* The N. S. Assembly seems to have taken no action on the question, save in 1857 to declare that two clerical members did not form a quorum of Presbytery.† The Southern Presbyterian Church requires the presence of an Elder to form a quorum: "Any three Ministers belonging to the Presbytery, together with at least one Ruling Elder, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business."‡

May less than three Ministers be a quorum?

"*Three Ministers, with as many Elders as may be present,*" are necessary. Two may meet and adjourn from time to time until another arrives,§ but can do nothing else. They cannot receive a Minister who is present with a certificate from another Presbytery, and thus form a quorum. The reception of a member is the act of a Presbytery, and not of a committee, nor can the act of less than a quorum be legalized by the quorum thus obtained.† The General Assembly can make it valid,‖ but the Synod cannot.¶

In peculiar cases, where by death or removals the Presbytery has been reduced to two members, they may receive new members and transact business with the quorum thus obtained, but such reception and business have no validity until sanctioned and legalized by the General Assembly.¶ Less than a quorum cannot table charges nor take any steps toward discipline, because such acts belong to the Presbytery,** which cannot consider charges received "by individuals usurping its prerogatives." Nor

* *Presbyterian Digest,* p. 185. See also *Church Polity,* p. 300.

† *Ibid.,* p. 186.

‡ *Book of Church Order,* ch. v., sect. iv., sub-sect. iii.

§ *General Rules for Judicatories,* iii. See p. 531. ‖ *Ibid.,* p. 190.

¶ *Minutes G. A. 1898,* p. 139. ** *Book of Discipline,* sects. 18, 37.

can less than a quorum appoint commissioners to the General Assembly.*

VIII. What is the first power of Presbytery?

"*To receive and issue appeals, complaints and references from church Sessions brought before them in an orderly manner, and in the trial of judicial cases the Presbytery shall have power to appoint and act by Judicial Commissions.*" Acts of Presbytery are to be respected and obeyed until repealed on appeal or complaint.†

How does an appeal differ from a reference?

"A reference is a representation in writing, made by an inferior to a superior judicatory, of a judicial case not yet decided," "for mere advice preparatory to a decision by the inferior judicatory, or for ultimate trial and decision by the superior;" while "an appeal is the removal of a judicial case, by a written representation, from an inferior to a superior judicatory; and may be taken by either of the original parties from the final judgment of the lower judicatory. These parties shall be called Appellant and Appellee." An appeal is for a change of sentence. In the former case the higher is called upon to help the lower court in its duty; in the latter case it must verify or correct the action of the lower court. A reference is made "by an inferior judicatory to a superior." An appeal, if in order, must be heard and decided by the higher court, but a reference may be returned, "either with or without advice, to the inferior judicatory."‡

What is a complaint?

Before 1821 no distinction was made between a complaint and an appeal; the usual expression was, "We

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 187. † *Ibid.*, p. 190.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, sects. 77, 79, 94.

complain and appeal."* "A complaint is a written representation made to the next superior judicatory by one or more persons subject and submitting to the jurisdiction of the judicatory complained of, respecting any delinquency or any decision by an inferior judicatory." † The signers must have given notice within ten days.‡ In non-judicial cases if it be signed by at least one-third of the members recorded present, the execution of the decision shall be stayed.§ A complaint in order and with sufficient reasons must be heard.‖

Do the Scriptures recognize the right of appeal?

It is assumed in all that is said of the unity of the Church. There is but one law of God, which is binding upon all churches and the whole Church. Any misapplication of law is a wrong, not only to the individual or particular church, but to the body. The one member who suffers has a right to appeal to the whole Church, which suffers with it. It is recognized in the appointment of courts of appeal (Ex. 18 : 25, 27). The synagogues were subject to the Sanhedrim. The first Christian churches were not isolated, but were united under the Apostles and the recognized authority of general councils (Acts 15 : 5, 6, 19, 20).¶

How should an appeal be answered?

Some denominations, as the Congregational, vest all authority in the local church, and accord to the assembly of churches only the right of advice or counsel. This gives the small body more authority than the larger, the part more than the whole. The local church may set at

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 721.
† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 83.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 714.
§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 85.
‖ *Ibid.*, sect. 87.
¶ *What is Presbyterianism?* pp. 68–72.

naught the decision of the denomination, and persist in holding doctrines denounced as heretical, and continue discipline declared to be wrongly inflicted. The rights of individuals, the peace of particular churches and the purity of the whole body require that appeals be answered with authority (Acts 15 : 10, 19, 20, 23–29; 1 Cor. 5 : 3, 4, 12, 13).*

How should a reference be answered?

A reference may be for advice, in which case advice should be given.† But the advice thus given cannot lightly be set aside. It comes from the higher court, and must be respected. The reference may be "for ultimate trial and decision," or it may be an overture; in either case the decision of the Presbytery is of authority, and is binding until revoked by a higher judicatory.

What is meant by "in an orderly manner"?

According to the law and usage of the Church. (1) An appeal must be from one of the original parties, (2) after submitting to a trial before Session; (3) a written notice must have been given to the Session, with reasons, within ten days after the sentence appealed from has been passed; (4) it must be lodged with the Clerk of the Presbytery before the close of the second day of their session; and (5) it must be couched in respectful language.‡

A complaint may come from those subject to Session; notice, with reasons, must be given within ten days after the action was taken; it must be lodged with the Clerk of the higher court before the close of the second day of its meeting; and must be in respectful language.§

* See p. 120–125. † *Book of Discipline*, sect. 79.

‡ *Ibid.*, sects. 94, 96; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 721.

§ *Book of Discipline*, sects. 83, 84.

A reference can come only from a judicatory, and in a case not yet decided, and must be in writing.*

What is the effect of a notice of appeal?

"When the judgment directs admonition or rebuke, notice of appeal shall suspend all further proceedings; but in other cases the judgments shall be in force until the appeal is decided,"† that is "by the highest judicatory to which the case is carried."‡ The O. S. Assembly in 1864 decided that an appeal against a certain action did not prohibit the Presbytery from acting as they thought necessary for the peace and prosperity of the Church.§ In 1881 the Assembly decided that when a Presbytery dissolved a church and ordered the Elders to cease to exercise their office, "the effect of an appeal is to continue all the rights of the Elders as to representation in the higher courts until the appeal is finally issued by the higher judicatories." And that "a complaint alone does not suspend or arrest the action complained of."‖ "Whenever a complaint, in cases non-judicial, is entered against a decision of a judicatory, signed by at least one-third of the members recorded as present when the action was taken, the execution of such decision shall be stayed until the final issue of the case by the superior judicatory."¶

How are appeals to be heard?

The Moderator from the chair should solemnly warn the Presbytery that "it is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and enjoin the members to recollect their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty on which they are

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 77.
† *Ibid.*, sect. 100.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 777.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 778.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 718.
¶ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 85.

about to enter."* The trial should be conducted strictly according to the "Book of Discipline." "When due notice of an appeal has been given, and the appeal and the specifications of the errors alleged have been filed in due time, the appeal shall be considered in order. The judgment, the notice of appeal, the appeal, and the specifications of the errors alleged, shall be read; and the judicatory may then determine, after hearing the parties, whether the appeal shall be entertained. If it be entertained, the following order shall be observed: (1) The record in the case, from the beginning, shall be read, except what may be omitted by consent. (2) The parties shall be heard, the appellant opening and closing. (3) Opportunity shall be given to the members of the judicatory appealed from to be heard. (4) Opportunity shall be given to the members of the superior judicatory to be heard. (5) The vote shall then be separately taken, without debate, on each specification of error alleged, the question being taken in the form: 'Shall the specification of error be sustained?' If no one of the specifications be sustained, and no error be found by the judicatory in the record, the judgment of the inferior judicatory shall be affirmed. If one or more errors be found, the judicatory shall determine whether the judgment of the inferior judicatory shall be reversed or modified, or the case remanded for a new trial; and the judgment, accompanied by a recital of the error or errors found, shall be entered on the record. If the judicatory deem it wise, an explanatory minute may be adopted which also shall be a part of the record of the case."† Complaints are heard in the same way.‡ If the prosecutor does not

* *General Rules for Judicatories*, xl. † *Book of Discipline*, sect. 99.
‡ *Ibid.*, sect. 87; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 717.

appear, the case may be dismissed and the decision remains in force.*

What shall be done if the records are not presented?

The Session may be censured for not presenting their records, having received due notice of the appeal, and "the sentence appealed from shall be suspended, until a record is produced on which the issue can be fairly tried."*

Must the records be read?

With consent of parties the reading of the records may be dispensed with, when the facts are admitted by the parties.† The records may be printed and distributed to the members of the court, and if attested by the Clerk of the lower court, and with consent of parties, the reading may be omitted.‡ In 1847 the O. S. Assembly declined to examine an appeal, because the record was too voluminous, and because the interests of the Church would be better promoted by dismissing the case without further trial, the appellant consenting.§

Who are the original parties?

"The original parties are the parties concerned in the origin of the dispute." "When the prosecution is initiated by a judicatory, THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA shall be the prosecutor and an original party; in all other cases the individual prosecutor shall be an original party."|| "The prosecuting committee, representing THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, is entitled to conduct the prosecution, in all its stages, in whatever judicatory, until the final issue is reached.¶

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 732, 779, 780; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 101.
† *Ibid.*, p. 745; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 99.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 747.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 677.
|| *Book of Discipline*, sect. 10.
¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 637.

How are the members of the inferior judicatory to be heard?

They have a right individually to speak "in explanation of the grounds of their decision, or of their dissent from it." A committee is often appointed to express and defend the action of the court. The permission of the Assembly to those of the lower Court, not members of its body, to be heard "is not to be pleaded as a precedent." *

How shall the members of the inferior court retire?

The withdrawal may be construed either literally—then the members must leave the house: this has very frequently been insisted upon before the division, and by the O. S. Assembly as late as 1859—or metaphorically, when the members may remain, but must be silent, and are considered out of the house. This was allowed several times before the division. The N. S. body does not seem to have taken any action, nor has the reunited Church. The clause is generally understood literally.†

May an appeal be tried by a commission?

"A commission is an extraordinary committee of a church court, appointed either for some special business or to take cognizance of such as may arise during the vacations of the court. It differs from an ordinary committee in that it is empowered not only to inquire and prepare business for the action of the court, but also provisionally to come to any such determinations and enforce any such decisions as would be within the competence of the court itself. It differs from a court, as its decisions and determinations are merely provisionary and of force *ad interim*, and must be subject to the revision and ultimate determination of the court, by which they may be set aside and annulled, and which alone can by its sanc-

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 99; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 749.

† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 23; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 652.

tion, either tacit or express, give them permanent authority."* The decision of a judicial commission is the act of the body which appointed it, and can be reversed only on appeal or complaint by a higher judicatory. Formerly every disputant was regarded as having the right to be heard by the whole judicatory, and trial by commission was allowable only with consent of parties. But in 1894 the Book of Discipline was amended to authorize Presbyteries to appoint judicial commission in all cases, which may "sit during the intervals between the meetings of the appointing Presbytery." See page 253.

May an appeal be dismissed?

It may when the appeal is not presented in an orderly manner;† when the appellant fails to appear in person or by counsel;‡ when the records are absent; when no evidence is presented to sustain the allegations;§ when a previous decision covers the case;‖ when no one is aggrieved by the technical informality; when the reasons assigned are vague, insufficient.¶

May the verdict in the case by a civil court be reason for an appeal?

The verdict in the civil court is the application of a human law through its forms of trial, testimony and judgment. The Church has to do with a divine law and its own methods. That which is an offence in the Church may not be in the State. Often the State has forbidden what the Church commands. In cases of crimes the civil court may acquit or convict on a tech-

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 233, note.

† See p. 192.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect 97.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 726, 736, 743, 779.

‖ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 62.

¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 727.

nicality which the Church cannot regard. Its verdict and reasons should be considered, but cannot determine the sentence of the Session.* One pleading, under certain circumstances, "guilty" in the civil court, and acquitted by the Session, should have the confidence of the Church, and his plea in the former cannot be used as a reason for a complaint against the sentence of the latter.†

What may the decision be?

"If no one of the specifications be sustained, and no error be found by the judicatory in the record, the judgment of the inferior judicatory shall be affirmed. If one or more errors be found, the judicatory shall determine whether the judgment of the inferior judicatory shall be reversed or modified, or the case remanded for a new trial; and the judgment, accompanied by a recital of the error or errors found, shall be entered on the record." "The effect of a complaint, if sustained, may be the reversal in whole or in part of the action of the lower judicatory; and may also, in cases non-judicial, be the infliction of censure upon the judicatory complained of."‡

How is the vote taken?

"The vote shall then be separately taken, without debate, on each specification of error alleged, the question being taken in the form: 'Shall the specification of error be sustained?'" . . . . "If the judicatory deem it wise, an explanatory minute may be adopted which shall be a part of the record of the case."‡ "In cases of complaint involving a judicial decision, proceedings in an appellate judicatory shall be had in the order and as provided in section 99."§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 605. † *Ibid.*, p. 707.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, sects. 88 and 99; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 717.

§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 87.

Who may vote?

All the members of the court, except that "neither the appellant nor the members of the judicatory appealed from, shall sit, deliberate or vote in the case."* So also in the case of complaint.† In 1836 the Assembly decided that an Elder of the lower court could not vote, even though he was not a member of that court when the case was tried. But Ministers or Elders who were *in transitu*, dismissed before the trial in the lower court, but not received by another body, could vote on the appeal in the higher. The Moderator of the judicatory, if a member of the court appealed from, must retire from the chair while the appeal is being tried. Other members who may be personally interested in the result of the appeal may voluntarily retire or be challenged.‡ "In judicial cases no one shall be allowed to dissent or protest who did not vote against the decision."§

What is a Protest?

A Protest is a formal written declaration made by one or more of a minority against a proceeding or decision deemed injurious. If presented according to the Book of Discipline, it must be entered on the minutes of the Judicatory.‖ An answer may be prepared and recorded.

How are appeals made in other Churches?

In the Episcopal Church a communicant who has been repelled from the communion by the Rector may within three months complain in writing to the Bishop, who may restore him, or he may institute an inquiry into the case, according to the canons of the diocese.¶

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 98. † *Ibid.*, sect. 90.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 739. § *Book of Discipline*, sect. 107.
‖ *Ibid.*, sects. 103–107; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 789.
¶ *Canons*, 1878, title ii., canon xii.

In the Reformed Episcopal Church an offending communicant must be regularly tried by a court composed of the Rector and Churchwardens of the congregation to which he belongs. He may have a Minister or a communicant as his counsel. If dissatisfied with the result of the trial, he may within ten days give notice of his intention to appeal. Within ten days after the notice he must present his appeal, with reasons, in writing, to the president of the court and to the Secretary of the General Council, by whom the appeal shall be tried.*

In the Methodist Church a member may appeal from the decision of the committee of communicants appointed to try him † to the next Quarterly Conference. "And if, in the judgment of the Presiding Elder," because of local prejudice, "an impartial trial cannot be had in the Quarterly Conference of the circuit or station where the appellant resides, he may, on the demand of either party, cause the appeal to be tried by any other Quarterly Conference within his district, after due notice to the complainant and appellant." ‡

In the Lutheran Church appeals of communicants from decisions of the church Council may be carried to the Synod.§

In Congregational churches, if any member thinks that he has been improperly disciplined, a mutual Council may be called, "chosen half by each party, to revise the case, and to give their opinion or advice to the church. In this advice both parties generally concur, though the church is not compelled to follow it when adverse to its own judgment. If the church should not concur in the

* *Canons*, 1874, title ii., canons iv., v., vi.

† See p. 160.

‡ *Discipline*, 1880, p. 157.

§ *Formula of Government*, ch. viii., sect. iv.

result, a copy of the opinion of the Council would be a sufficient letter of recommendation for the aggrieved person with which to unite with another church. If the church refuse to unite with the complainant in calling a mutual Council, he may summon an *ex-parte* Council of such churches as he may please; and if that Council justify him, he may use their result as a letter of recommendation in applying to another church."*

What is the second power of Presbytery?

"*To examine and license Candidates for the holy ministry.*"† The Candidate must be recommended by the Session to the Presbytery, who directs his studies, examines and licenses him (1 Tim. 4 : 14; Acts 13 : 2, 3).‡

Who is a Candidate?

No one is recognized as a candidate until he has been received as such under the care of the Presbytery to which he naturally belongs, after a careful examination as to his piety, motives for desiring to enter the ministry, and qualifications for the work.§

To whom is he responsible?

He is still a member of the particular church, and therefore is responsible to the Session in all things concerning his Christian conduct. The Presbytery has the charge of his studies, and must be the judge of his diligence and ability, and decide when he may be licensed or his name be stricken from the roll of Candidates.‖

Upon what must he be examined?

See "Form of Government," ch. xiv.¶

* *Congregational Manual*, p. 11; *Congregationalism*, p. 214.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xiv. See p. 327.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 548–552.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 552. See p. 323. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 560. ¶ See p. 349.

What is meant by license?

The grant of authority to preach the gospel. It is a part of trial of the Candidate's fitness for the ministry. It may be recalled when to the Presbytery "his services do not appear to be edifying to the churches." It is of force only during four years, and may be extended for the period of one more year. This is not to be understood "as abridging the power and discretion of the Presbyteries to license probationers in extraordinary cases."* In 1874 the Assembly said, "The determination of the sense of the words 'extraordinary cases' must be left to the Presbytery in connection with the circumstances of each case."† License must be with a view to the ministry, and not "as a means to attain a higher measure of usefulness merely, without aiming to reach ordination;" which "would be virtually to make two grades of preaching officers." ‡

In the Episcopal Church the Bishop exercises this power, on the recommendation of a committee appointed by the Standing Committee of the diocese. §

In Congregational churches the license is granted by the Association; that is, by a body composed of Ministers. "They meet for prayer and mutual counsel; they examine and approbate those who may wish to enter the ministry; and they make useful suggestions to the churches," but exercise no other ecclesiastical power. || In some places the license can be granted only by a Council called for that purpose by the church of which the Candidate is a member. This seems to be more in accordance with the principles of Congregationalism.

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiv., sect. xi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 559.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 560. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 559, 573.
§ *Canons*, 1878, title i., canon iii. || *Congregational Manual*, p. 10.

In the Baptist Church the local church may license those considered qualified. This is generally done when the Candidates begin their preparation for the ministry.

In the Methodist Church the Candidates are recommended by the Leaders' meeting to the Quarterly Conference, which grants the license after an examination by the Presiding Elder.* The license is given early in their course of training, and is renewed from year to year. Exhorters recommended by Leaders' meeting or by the class of which they are members, may be licensed by the Preacher in charge to exhort, but not to preach from a text.

In the Lutheran Church the Candidates are examined by a ministerial Session composed "exclusively of Scripture Elders—that is, Preachers"—which "is called a Ministerium or Presbytery." This body examine, license and ordain Candidates for the ministry.†

What is the third power of Presbytery?

"To ordain, install, remove and judge Ministers" (1 Tim. 4 : 14; Acts 13 : 2, 3).

What is ordination?

It is the solemn consecration of a person, by prayer and the laying on of hands, to an office in the Church.

The Romish Church regards it as the impartation of a certain grace or divine influence and power. It insists, therefore, on the necessity of apostolic succession and on the peculiar relation of those thus ordained to the Church and to Christ.

In the Episcopal Church much of this view has been retained, as is seen, in the stress laid upon apostolic succession and in the form of ordination. The Bishop says: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a

* *Discipline*, 1880, p. 69. See p. 391.

† *Formula of Government*, chs. xvii. and xviii.

Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God and of his holy sacraments: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."*

The Reformed Episcopal Church has adopted the view of ordination taken by most Protestant churches, and has omitted the above form and adopted that which, though optional, is seldom used in the Episcopal Church: "Take thou authority to execute the office of a Presbyter in the Church of God, now committed unto thee, and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word," etc.†

The Methodist Church has changed it into a prayer or benediction: "The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Ghost for the office and work of an Elder in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the authority of the Church through the imposition of our hands; and be thou a faithful dispenser," etc.‡

The Presbyterian form of ordination may be seen on p. 383.

By whom should ordination be performed?

The Catholic Apostolic Church hold that ordination can be performed only by the Apostles or by legates appointed by them in special cases.

The Episcopal Church hold that Ministers are of three orders, each having a distinct office and work. Deacons and Priests are ordained by the Bishop of the diocese, and Bishops by a number of Bishops.* The Reformed Epis-

* *Common Prayer.* See p. 388.

† *Common Prayer Reformed Episcopal Church.*

‡ *Discipline,* 1880, p. 329.

copal Church at the ordination of a Bishop. "The Bishop presiding, and three or more Presbyters, with such other Bishops as may be present," shall join in laying on hands. Presbyters also join with the Bishop in the ordination of Presbyters, but not of Deacons.*

In the Methodist Church the Bishop, with the Elders, lays on hands, except in the ordination of Deacons.†

In the Congregational Church the Council called to ordain a Candidate appoints a committee of two or more Ministers to perform the service in the presence of the Council.

In the Presbyterian Church, Ministers are ordained by the Presbytery (1 Tim. 4 : 14).‡ In the early part of the last century ordination was sometimes performed by a commission of Presbytery.§ In 1894 the Assembly declared that "ordination either by a Committee or by a Commission of Presbytery is contrary to the express provisions of Chapter xv., Sect. xii. of the Form of Government."‖ A candidate on foreign mission ground where there is no Presbytery cannot be licensed or ordained by the Mission but only by a "Presbytery or a Commission duly constituted by a Presbytery." A Mission has no such authority. This was the reply of the Assembly in 1896 to the mission in Korea asking for advice as to the ecclesiastical power of a Mission.‖

May ordination be by two Ministers?

In 1850 a candidate was examined and approved by a quorum of Presbytery, but when he was about to be ordained only two Ministers were present, who proceeded

* *Common Prayer, Reformed Episcopal Church.*

† *Discipline*, 1880, pp. 323, 339, 345.

‡ See p. 383.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 192.

‖ *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 194.

to ordain. The O. S. Assembly recognized this to be irregular, but valid.*

Where should Ministers be ordained?

In the presence of the people among whom they are to labor.† Exceptions are often made in the case of Evangelists, who are "to preach in frontier or destitute settlements" beyond the bounds of Presbyteries, of foreign Missionaries, and where it is highly inconvenient or impossible.‡

Is lay ordination valid?

Whether performed by communicants, by Elders or by deposed Ministers, it is invalid. It must be by vote of Presbytery and by the laying on of the hands of Ministers. Neither can Elders or other laymen take part with Ministers in the act of ordination.§

Is the ordination of other denominations to be recognized?

Certainly. "The Presbyterian Church has always considered the ordination of most other Protestant churches as valid in themselves."‖ Romish ordination is not valid.¶ This is true also of Unitarian, of Campbellite, and of Universalist ordination.** But while the evangelical Protestant churches and their Ministers are recognized, Ministers applying to be received into the Presbyterian Church are required "to continue their study and preparation till they are found on trial and examination to be qualified in learning and ability to teach in the manner required by our standards; but that when found to be thus

* *Church Polity*, p. 305.
† *Form of Government*, ch. xv.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 574.
§ *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 572.
‖ *Ibid.*, pp. 194–205.
¶ *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 105.
** *Ibid.*, pp. 228, 857.

qualified it shall not be necessary to reordain said applicants." They must, however, formally "receive and adopt the 'Confession of Faith' of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures," the usual form being to give assent to the questions asked of the Candidate for ordination.* In 1880 the Assembly enjoined the Presbyteries, "when dealing with applications from Ministers of other denominations for admission into our Church, to demand of such applicants evidence of having had a course of collegiate and theological instruction equivalent to that demanded in the case of Candidates for the ministry under the care of our Presbyteries, and that such applicants shall be subject to a particular and careful examination in theology."† In all such cases the Presbyteries should "be careful to record the circumstances of the case, and the reasons which induced them to receive such ordained Minister."‡

Is ordination procured by fraud valid?

It is, but "the Presbytery should in such case proceed immediately to depose him who has been guilty of fraud."‡ Such was the decision of the O. S. Assembly in 1843.

May one be ordained who does not expect to devote his life to preaching the gospel?

Teachers, Professors, Editors, etc., whose work is approved by Presbytery, may be ordained *sine titulo*, provided, from a full view of their qualifications and circumstances, the Presbytery shall think it expedient to ordain them.§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 10, 194.
† *Ibid.*, p. 196.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 195.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

May a Presbytery ordain a Candidate who is to labor within the bounds of another Presbytery?

The Assembly has earnestly recommended, as "our 'Form of Government' seems to recognize the right and privilege of each Presbytery to examine and ordain those who come to the pastoral office within their bounds, and who have never before exercised that office," that men who propose to pursue the work of the ministry in any section of the country where a Presbytery is already organized shall go as Licentiates, and there be ordained. The Congregational churches of New England were also requested not to ordain those who propose to labor in the bounds of our Presbyteries.*

May ordinations take place on the Sabbath?

There is no general rule on the subject. It is inconvenient for the Presbytery to meet on the Sabbath, and this, with other reasons, led the Assembly to say in 1821, "It is not expedient that ordinations should take place on the Sabbath, yet there may be cases in which urgent and peculiar circumstances may demand them." †

What is installation?

The settlement of a Minister over a congregation as its Pastor. The call from the church is sent to the Presbytery, and if approved is placed in the hands of the Licentiate or Minister. If it be accepted, the Presbytery may adjourn to meet at the church and ordain and install him, or, if he be a Minister, a committee may be sent to install him.‡

May the Presbytery refuse to install?

The congregation and Minister may be fully satisfied

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 473. † *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 570.

‡ *Form of Government*, chs. xv. and xvi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 577. See p. 376.

and unite in urging the pastoral relation, yet the Presbytery has the right to refuse. So the O. S. Assembly replied to an overture in 1855.* The "Form of Government," ch. xv., sect. ix., implies this right: "If the Presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may accordingly be presented." In 1814 and in 1817 the Assembly defended the right of the Presbytery to refuse to put the call into a Minister's hands, and again in 1875.†

Can the terms of the call be afterward changed?

It is a mutual contract, and can be changed, therefore, by mutual consent, subject always to the review of the Presbytery. If, however, the parties do not agree in a proposed change, nothing can be done without the consent of Presbytery, because the terms of the call were the conditions upon which the Presbytery consented to the installation, and because that body has the supervision and charge of the pastoral relation.‡

What is meant by "removing" Ministers?

Releasing them from the charge of a church. This may be done (1) at the Pastor's request; (2) on the petition of the congregation; (3) according to the desire of Pastor and people;§ (4) when the Presbytery judges it expedient, even though the Pastor and his people remonstrate,‖ and even without a formal meeting of the congregation;‖ (5) at the petition of some other church which may desire his services; (6) the Synod may on appeal order the removal of a Pastor;¶ (7) the Presbytery, af-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 569.
† *Ibid.*, p. 569. See p. 377.
‡ *Form of Government*, chs. xv., xvi., xvii.
§ See pp. 401–411. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 580.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

ter trying charges against a Pastor and finding him innocent, should "determine the question of the expediency of the continuance of the pastoral relation, in such a manner as they may judge to be just to the contending parties and for the interests of religion."* (8) The General Assembly may require his services elsewhere.

May a Minister be dismissed to another denomination or Presbytery while continuing Pastor of the church?

The church and Pastor must belong to the same Presbytery.† The Pastor is not entitled to join another body while continuing his pastoral relation.‡ He may not be dismissed if unsound.§

What is meant by "to judge Ministers"?

To have jurisdiction over them. Ministers are not accountable to the Session, nor primarily to the Synod or General Assembly, but to the Presbytery, which judges of their qualifications, determines their positions and work, and is responsible for their personal and official good standing. In case of charges brought against them the Presbytery must try them and give judgment.‖

May the Presbytery judge of the fitness of its members?

In all cases a Minister bringing proper testimonials from another Presbytery should be received, unless he has forfeited his good standing since his dismissal; in which case he is responsible to the Presbytery which dismissed him, and which must be informed of his misconduct, that they may examine the charges against him.¶ The rule of the General Assembly should be ob-

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 46. † See p. 186.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 201. § *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 103.

‖ *Form of Government*, chs. xvi., xvii.; *Book of Discipline*, sects. 18, 36, 37; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 202, 207, 658-664.

¶ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 110; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 795.

served—that Ministers should belong to the Presbytery within whose bounds they reside.* It is right also for the Presbytery to judge of the expediency of receiving those whose letters may be regular and good, but it should not refuse without sufficient reasons.† If there is any reasonable doubt of their piety or soundness in doctrine, the Presbytery has the right to satisfy itself by examination or by some other method. In 1837 the Assembly made it imperative on the Presbyteries to examine all applicants for admission. The next year the N. S. Assembly declared this order null and void, while not denying the right of Presbytery to satisfy itself of the fitness of its members. In the proposed plan of reunion the right to examine Ministers from other Presbyteries was distinctly asserted, but discretion was left to each Presbytery. In the final agreement of reunion it is thus expressed: "It is earnestly recommended to the lower judicatories of the Church that they conform their practice in relation to all such usages, as far as is consistent with their convictions of duty, to the general customs of the Church prior to the controversies that resulted in the separation."‡ In 1880 the Assembly recommended "that the matter be left to the Presbyteries, as the rightful judges of the qualifications of their own members."§ The right to examine is therefore claimed when there is reason for doubt or suspicion of unsoundness.

If a Minister be received hastily, and be found unworthy, can his reception be reconsidered?

No. He has been admitted, and his membership can be severed only by regular process.‡

* See p. 182.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 202.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 193, 204.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Can an applicant be rejected?

If the Presbytery be not satisfied with his qualifications, he may be refused, for sufficient reasons.*

May a Minister be received on a qualified letter?

A qualified letter cannot be given to a Minister. He can be received only on a certificate of good standing.†

How can a Minister be received from an extinct Presbytery?

In 1825 the Assembly declared the Presbytery to which he applies may receive him, and, if he be charged with an offence, conduct process against him. It has the right to decline receiving him; he may then appeal to Synod, and it ought to decline if there is no prospect of giving him an impartial trial. All such Ministers are under the jurisdiction of the Synod, which must take action. "If a Presbytery become extinct, the Synod, with which it was connected, shall have jurisdiction over its members."‡

How should Ministers and Licentiates from corresponding bodies be received?

Licentiates must answer in the affirmative the constitutional questions directed to be put to our own Candidates for licensure; and Ministers must give their assent to the first seven questions which are asked of those applying for ordination.§ Those coming from the Southern Presbyterian Church are to be received as those from our own Presbyteries.‖

How may a foreign Minister be received?

He must present his credentials to a committee of Presbytery, who shall inspect them and ascertain his soundness in faith and piety. The committee may allow him

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 202, 204. † *Ibid.*, p. 205.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 203; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 113.

§ See *Form of Government*, ch. xiv., sect. vii.; ch. xv., sect. xii.

‖ *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 133.

to preach in the churches until the next meeting of Presbytery, when he shall be examined and received on probation for one whole year, during which time he may exercise all the functions of a Minister except that he cannot vote in any church court nor accept a call. The case shall then be reported to Synod or the General Assembly for final action on his reception or rejection. If the Synod or General Assembly will not meet within three months after the end of his probation, the Presbytery may report to the meeting of the Synod or General Assembly which precedes the close of his probation, and receive directions and authority from the higher court to take final action. The year of probation must be spent within the bounds of one and the same Presbytery. If he be received on probation, and then revisits Europe, on his return he must undergo another probation. This rule was enforced by both branches of the Presbyterian Church by decisions rendered (O. S.) 1858 and (N. S.) 1855–69. In 1869 the probation was waived in cases where the Minister came from a Presbytery in correspondence with the Assembly. By the reunited Church further exception was made in favor of those coming from Presbyterian churches of Great Britain,* and those from such churches of Canada.† The above rules were recognized in 1875.† They do not apply to missionaries on the supplementary rolls of Presbytery, nor Ministers from churches in correspondence with our Assembly.‡

May a Minister be dismissed to a Presbytery to be erected?

Only when a higher court has given authority for its formation. So the O. S. Assembly decided.§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 196–199.
† *Ibid.*, p. 199.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 199.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

Who may grant letters of dismission?

The Presbytery alone. Neither the Moderator nor the Clerk, nor a committee of Presbytery, can dismiss Candidates, Licentiates or Ministers with or without charge.* The certificate shall give the date of ordination,† "and specify the particular body to which he is recommended; and, if recommended to a Presbytery, no other than the one designated, if existing, shall receive him;" "and the fact of his reception shall be promptly communicated to the Presbytery dismissing him."‡ The name should be retained until notice of his reception be received from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery receiving him. Privileges of membership cease with the granting of dismissal.§

May a Minister be dismissed to another denomination?

He may be dismissed to those bodies which are in correspondence with the General Assembly. If unsound or disloyal, he should be reprimanded, and not dismissed as in good standing.‖ "If a Minister not otherwise chargeable with an offence renounces the jurisdiction of this Church, by abandoning the ministry, or becoming independent or joining another denomination not deemed heretical, without a regular dismission, the Presbytery shall take no other action than to record the fact and to erase his name from the roll. If charges are pending against him he may be tried thereon. If it appears that he has joined another denomination deemed heretical, he may be suspended, deposed or excommuninated."¶

When may a name be removed from the roll?

"The name of every Minister receiving a certificate

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 201. † *Minutes G. A. 1886*, p. 49.
‡ *Book of Discipline*, sects. 111, 115; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 796.
§ *Ibid.*, pp. 801, 795. ‖ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 103.
¶ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 53; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 669.

of dismission shall be retained, on the roll of the Presbytery dismissing him, until notice of his reception be received from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery receiving him." * If a Minister has changed his doctrinal belief "Christian honor demands that he should withdraw from our Ministry."† The name of a Minister, absent for years, his address unknown, may be dropped by permission of G. Assembly.‡ The names of Foreign Missionaries who have united with union Presbyteries are to be placed on a Supplementary roll of the home Presbytery, and published in the minutes of the G. Assembly.§

May a Presbytery refuse to grant a letter of dismissal?

A Minister can be dismissed only as in good standing. If, therefore, he be under charges or sentence, or has been deposed, the Presbytery may refuse to dismiss him or to remove the sentence on his plea of penitence.‖

May a Minister demit his office?

This is sometimes desired. The Church before the division, both branches (the O. S. and N. S.), and the reunited Church, have refused to allow the demission of the ministry.¶ Though providentially incapacitated, his rights as a Minister remain (as to presbyterial oversight and judgment, a seat and vote in the church courts, etc.) until he be deposed after regular trial. He may hold the office of Chaplain in the army or navy, or even a civil office, or engage in worldly business, subject to the judgment of Presbytery, which should inquire frequently for his reasons for so doing, and record them with

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 801.
† *Ibid.*, p. 668; *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 108.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 669.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 181.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 511. See p. 210.
¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 211.

approval or disapproval.* In 1880 the Assembly received another overture on this subject, and referred it to the Committee on the Revision of the "Book of Discipline."† When the revised Book was adopted in 1884 it contained the following section: "If a Minister, otherwise in good standing, shall make application to be released from the office of the ministry, he may, at the discretion of the Presbytery, be put on probation, for one year at least, in such a manner as the Presbytery may direct, in order to ascertain his motives and reasons for such a relinquishment. And if, at the end of this period, the Presbytery be satisfied that he cannot be useful and happy in the exercise of his ministry, they may allow him to demit the office, and return to the condition of a private member in the Church, ordering his name to be stricken from the roll of the Presbytery, and giving him a letter to any church with which he may desire to connect himself."‡ If he should afterward desire to resume his ministry he must apply for re-ordination.§

What must be done with those who abandon the ministry?

If the Presbytery be not satisfied with their reasons, charges should be brought against them.‖

How should absentees from Presbytery be treated?

If they neglect to answer inquiries of Presbytery, they should be disciplined.¶ If their residences be unknown, their names should be placed on a "reserved list" until knowledge of them be procured.¶

What should Presbytery do for unemployed Ministers?

(1) Provide as far as possible for each permanent or

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 201.
† *Ibid.*, p. 212.
‡ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 51.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 196.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 208.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 668.

occasional employment; (2) report their names to the Synodical Committee.* Those who are honorably retired (H. R.) retain all the functions of the ministry. This designation "does not affect in any way the status of the Minister or deprive him of any of the functions of his office." †

In 1873 the Board of Home Missions was instructed to organize a special bureau for unemployed Ministers and vacant congregations, whose duty shall be to gather and publish statistics, and to consider such cases of vacant churches and unemployed Ministers as are reported by Synodical Committees, and to endeavor to adjust and distribute these so that every capable Minister applying may have something to do, and every church may be supplied, but so as not in any wise to interfere with presbyterial prerogatives.* This bureau has often been commended for its work, and Synods and Presbyteries have been urged to co-operate with it. The plan is fully described in the report of Home Missions in 1877, but declared to be a failure, as unemployed Ministers made few applications to it, and Presbyteries and Synods had given very little attention to the subject.* In 1880 a special committee of five was appointed "to report some plan to alleviate or remove, if possible, these evils," to the next Assembly.* This committee brought in an able and valuable report, and designated three causes of the evils complained of: (1) "The want of an adequate support for the ministry;" (2) "a lack of consecration on the part of the ministry to its work;" and (3) "a want of system in bringing those who are able and willing to work, and vacant churches, together;" and proposed the following rules, which were adopted:

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886,* p. 176. † *Presbyterian Digest,* p. 145.

"1. Each Presbytery shall, at its semi-annual meeting, prepare a list of its vacant churches, and unemployed Ministers who are competent for service, and who have not been relieved from the active work of the ministry. From this list shall be excepted such vacant churches as have obtained leave from the Presbytery to supply themselves, and such unemployed Ministers as have obtained permission to labor outside the bounds of the Presbytery. The Presbytery shall also require of each of the churches on the list so prepared a report as to the amount it is able to contribute for the support of the preaching of the gospel during the ensuing six months, to the end that the Presbytery or its committee may determine the number of appointments to be made for it from the list of supplies. The Presbytery shall also determine the amount to be paid per week for pulpit supplies in said churches.

"2. The Committee on Home Missions in each Presbytery (or such other committee as the Presbytery may appoint for this duty) shall have supervision of all vacant churches in the interim of the Presbytery; and it shall be its duty to arrange for their supply from the list of unemployed Ministers. It shall send such Ministers to the vacant churches or mission-fields, in such order and rotation as may seem to it best; provided, however, that no Minister shall occupy one pulpit longer than two Sabbaths in succession in the rotation.

"3. If additional pecuniary support is, in the judgment of the Presbytery, needed to supply the vacant churches with stated preaching of the word, the Presbytery may set apart a portion of its home missionary contributions for this purpose. But such part of its contributions shall be sent through the Board of Home

Missions, which Board shall acknowledge it in its receipts.

"4. Should any church, in the interim, be prepared to call a Pastor or make provision for a Stated Supply, its name shall be removed from the list of vacant churches.

"5. In Synods having a synodical Missionary it shall be his duty to communicate with the several presbyterial committees as to the vacant churches and unemployed Ministers under their care and direction; and they shall co-operate with him in the work of organizing new fields and supplying those already in existence.

"6. All unemployed Ministers, able for service, who refuse to be placed on the list and work under the direction of the Presbytery, shall, if not excused, be retired, and so reported to the Assembly.

"7. If in the judgment of the Presbyteries it shall be thought best to make a more general arrangement between the unemployed Ministers and vacant churches within the bounds of the Synod, then the Synodical Committee shall take the place of the Presbyterial, and the duties assigned to the latter shall attach to the former, under such specific instructions as may seem best to each Synod.

"8. All in the act of the Assembly of 1873 concerning the vacant churches and unemployed Ministers, inconsistent with this act, is hereby repealed."*

The next year the Assembly was asked to give the interpretation of the third article of the above action, and replied,

"Inasmuch as the action referred to has reference to funds contributed, not for the mission-work of the whole Church, but for the work within the bounds of the Pres-

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, pp. 544–548.

bytery contributing the funds, these funds are to be returned in bulk to the Presbytery contributing them, to be distributed according to its direction. But this rule shall apply only to such special funds."*

This scheme also failed of its expected results. And another Committee was appointed in 1888, which reported an overture in 1892, but it was rejected by the Presbyteries. In 1894 Presbyteries and Synods were recommended to appoint Committees on vacant churches and unemployed ministers.†

What should be done with vacant churches?

(1) A Moderator should be appointed over their Session;‡ (2) provision should be made for permanent or occasional preaching; (3) the smaller vacant churches should be grouped together, and a Minister supported as far as possible by them; (4) they should receive special care and oversight; (5) effort should be made to bring vacant churches and unemployed Ministers together.§ In 1884 the Assembly requested all the Presbyteries to take the matter of vacant churches into consideration, "and to devise some plan each for itself whereby its vacant churches may be speedily supplied, and its unemployed Ministers brought into active service."‖ See page 572.

May a Minister withdraw from the Presbytery?

This is sometimes done to unite with some other denomination. Though such conduct be disorderly, the Assembly recommended that nothing in the case be done save the striking his name from the roll. When he gives formal notice that he renounces the fellowship of the Presbyterian Church and neglects to attend its courts, he

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 95. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 222.
‡ *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. iv.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 222. ‖ *Minutes G. A. 1884*, p. 87.

should be dealt with for such neglect, and his name struck from the roll; the fact should be communicated to him, and if necessary published to the Church.* The congregation of which he was Pastor cannot withdraw without Presbytery's consent. If, however, it give evidence of its intention to withdraw, and decline its further jurisdiction, the Presbytery may then drop the name of the church from its roll. But in all cases only the ecclesiastical relation is terminated; "the questions of property must be determined by the courts of the State."† If a Minister who has withdrawn from the Presbytery desire to return, he must make application to the same Presbytery from which he withdrew.‡

In 1884 the Assembly directed the Presbyteries "to require all Ministers whose names may be on their rolls, but who have identified themselves with other denominations as communicants, or as Pastors, or as stated supplies for three years, to take letters of dismission to the denominations with which the particular churches to which they minister may be connected; or, if they neglect to do so, then, on sufficient evidence of such identification, their names shall be dropped from our rolls."§ The next year the Assembly declared that "a Presbytery has no authority to take a Minister's name from the roll without his consent, except by discipline, unless he has said or done some thing which either recognizes some other ecclesiastical jurisdiction over him, or declares his independence. Presbyteries should, however, by correspondence, urge those who have identified themselves with other denominations to take regular dismissions."‖

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 53.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 214.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 206.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 214.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

May a suspended Minister's name be dropped from the roll without process?

It cannot be dropped. The Assembly declared in 1847 and 1882 the name of a suspended Minister must be retained until the Presbytery proceed to the higher censure of deposition.* It is not "proper to remove the name of a suspended member of the Presbytery from its roll and place it on a private register."*

What is judicial process?

The formal trial of charges, in which case it shall be the duty of the Moderator solemnly to announce from the chair "that the body is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty in which they are about to act."† Trial before Presbytery may be (1) of Elders, when the only Elder or Elders of a church be accused, or when the Session deem it inexpedient to proceed with the trial, and formally refer the case to the Presbytery.‡ (2) Of Ministers who are primarily responsible to Presbytery. "It shall be the duty of the Presbytery within whose bounds the offence is alleged to have been committed, if it shall be satisfied that there is probably ground for the accusation, to notify his Presbytery thereof and of the nature of the offence."§ Testimony may by request be taken by another Presbytery, notice being given to the accused of time and place.‖

By whom may charges be presented?

(1) "Process against an alleged offender shall not be

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 661.

† *General Rules for Judicatories*, xl. See p. 537.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 151; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 79.

§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 37. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 660.

commenced, unless some person undertakes to sustain the charge; or unless the judicatory finds it necessary for the ends of discipline to investigate the alleged offence." "Any person who appears as a prosecutor, without appointment by the judicatory, shall be warned before the charges are presented that, if he fail to show probable cause for the charges, he must himself be censured, as a slanderer of the brethren, in proportion to the malignancy or rashness which may appear in the prosecution."* (2) "When the prosecution is initiated by a judicatory, THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA shall be the prosecutor and an original party; in all other cases the individual prosecutor shall be an original party." "When the prosecution is initiated by a judicatory, it shall appoint one or more of its own members a committee to conduct the prosecution in all its stages in whatever judicatory, until the final issue be reached; *provided*, that any appellate judicatory before which the case is pending shall, if desired by the prosecuting committee, appoint one or more of its own members to assist in the prosecution, upon the nomination of the prosecuting committee."† (3) "If one who considers himself slandered requests an investigation which a judicatory finds it proper to institute, one or more of its members shall be appointed to investigate the alleged slander and make report in writing; and a record thereafter made may conclude the matter."‡

"As the honor and success of the gospel depend, in a great measure, on the character of its Ministers, each Presbytery ought, with the greatest care and impartiality, to watch over their personal and professional con-

* *Book of Discipline*, sects. 6, 14. † *Ibid.*, sects. 10, 11. See p. 195.
‡ *Ibid.*, sect. 12.

duct. But as, on the one hand, no Minister ought, on account of his office, to be screened from the hand of justice, or his offences to be slightly censured, so neither ought charges to be received against him on slight grounds."* Pending the trial, Presbytery may suspend him from the exercise of his ministry, and even from the communion. In 1866 the O. S. Assembly suspended certain commissioners from the court until it decided upon the conduct of their Presbytery.†

How is the trial to be conducted?

According to chs. iv. and vi. of the "Book of Discipline." "If a Minister accused of an offence refuses to appear by himself or counsel after being twice duly cited, he shall, for his contumacy, be suspended from his office: and if, after another citation, he refuses to appear by himself or counsel, he shall be suspended from the communion of the Church." "If a judicatory so decides, a member shall not be allowed, while charges are pending against him, to deliberate or vote on any question," and "may, if the edification of the Church demand it, require an accused Minister to refrain from the exercise of his office until final action in the case shall be taken; *provided*, that in all cases a speedy investigation or trial shall be had." But if "the matter complained of amount to no more than such acts of infirmity as may be amended and the people satisfied, so that little or nothing remains to hinder the usefulness of the offender, they shall take all prudent measures to remove the evil."‡

What charges may be brought against a Minister?

Charges may concern the personal character, as incon-

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 36.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 656, 657.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, sects. 38, 39, 42, 45.

sistency in his Christian life; or his official character, as heresy, schism or violation of his ordination vows. The charges must be serious, definite, in writing, and a copy, with the names of witnesses to be summoned, must be given to the accused at least ten days before the trial.*

May the Minister have counsel?

He may call upon any Minister or Elder belonging to the Presbytery to act as his counsel, or he may plead his own cause.†

May the forms of process be dispensed with?

The Assembly, before the separation, and in the O. S. and N. S. divisions, has frequently declared that the process cannot be dispensed with; no censure can be inflicted without trial, or even renewed without a new trial.‡ In accordance with this, the N. S. Assembly in 1866 decided that confession of guilt might shorten, but could not dispense with, the judicial process or trial.§ The O. S. Assembly seems to have made no such utterance, but has acted upon the principle.|| The "Book of Discipline" formerly read: "The charges shall be read to him" (the Minister), "and he shall be called upon to say whether he is guilty or not. If he confess, and the matter be base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, uncleanness or crimes of a higher nature, however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the Presbytery must without delay suspend him from the exercise of his office or depose him from the ministry." This has been generally understood to mean, in accordance with the above decisions, that such sentence must be

* *Book of Discipline*, sects. 15, 19, 20.

† *Ibid.*, sect. 26; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 654.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 642.

§ *Ibid.*, *1886*, pp. 128, 505. || See p. 159.

passed upon him after the trial; which process may be shortened because of his confession. In 1879, however, the Assembly decided that if the accused person confess guilt and willful persistence in sin, privately and before the judicatory, the court "may proceed to pass sentence without further process of trial."* The rule now is "if the plea be 'guilty,' the judicatory shall proceed to judgment; but if the plea be 'not guilty,' or if the accused decline to answer, a plea of 'not guilty' shall be entered of record and the trial proceed."†

May the Presbytery try by commission?

In the early history of our Church this was frequently done, and there seems to have been no question raised as to the right of the Presbyteries to appoint commissions for this purpose. The practice, however, passed away and for years trials were always held before the Presbytery itself. The reason appears to have been that the Minister had a right to the judgment of the whole court in the original trial and in appeal cases. In 1846 the constitutionality of appointing judicial commissions was disputed in the O. S. Assembly, and the matter was referred to a committee, which reported that, "in view of the original rights of our judicatories, of the long-continued practice of the Church, and of the great value of the right, on due occasions, of acting by commissions, the hope is respectfully expressed that the Assembly may do nothing which may have the effect of calling that right in question." The motion denying the right was indefinitely postponed.‡ The O. S. and N. S. Assemblies occasionally appointed judicial commissions to try appeals

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 660.
† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 22.
‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 244.

and complaints, with consent of parties. If these objected, their right to be heard by the whole court was not denied.* At the reunion the Assembly was found to be too large and overtasked to attend properly to judicial business, and therefore the practice of hearing appeals by commissions, with consent of parties, has become general. The Synods and Presbyteries are following the example of the highest court, guarding, however, the right of parties to be heard by the whole court if they so desire. In 1880 the Assembly recognized this as lawful by saying, "that [as] the case was tried by commission by consent of parties, we do not see that it furnishes any just ground of complaint." † In 1894 the Book of Discipline was so amended that judicial commissions may be, in all cases, appointed by Presbyteries as well as by the Synods and the G. Assembly.‡ See page 253.

What sentence may be passed on the guilty?

The sentence should be according to the nature as well as the degree of his offence. "If the accused be found guilty, he shall be admonished, rebuked, suspended or deposed from office (with or without suspension from church privileges in either case), or excommunicated. A Minister, suspended from office, may, at the expiration of one year, unless he give satisfactory evidence of repentance, be deposed without further trial."§ Suspension from office and deposition are to be distinguished from suspension from communion and excommunication. The former does not necessarily include the latter. A man may be unfit for office and yet be a worthy Christian. Unfaithfulness in duty does not always involve immor-

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 758. See p. 197.

† See p. 253.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 14.

§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 40.

ality. If both censures are intended by the Presbytery, they must be expressly mentioned in the sentence passed. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1848.* The sentence should be published, especially if the deposed Minister attempt to exercise any ministerial function, "that the churches may guard themselves against such dangerous impositions."*

May a deposed Minister be restored?

Application for restoration must always be made to the court which inflicted the sentence.† If suspended from the communion, his restoration to the privileges of the Church does not restore him to office.‡ "A Minister deposed for immoral conduct shall not be restored, even on the deepest sorrow for his sin, until after some considerable time of eminent and exemplary, humble and edifying conduct; and he ought in no case to be restored until it shall clearly appear, to the judicatory within whose bounds he resides, that the restoration can be effected without injury to the cause of religion; and then only by the judicatory inflicting the censure, or with its advice and consent."§ Great caution should be exercised.§ Restoration to the ministry (by re-ordination) does not reinstate as Pastor.‖

What is the standing of a suspended Minister?

He cannot exercise any of the functions of the ministry, but he is still a Minister, as an Elder is an Elder even when he ceases by his own act, by removal or by the advice of the Presbytery, to exercise his office.¶ "He ought by no means to be considered as occupying the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 207, 657.
† *Ibid.*, p. 206. ‡ See p. 59.
§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 43; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 662.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 664. ¶ See p. 58.

ground of a common Christian in good standing." He is not a member of a particular church, but is under the care of, and subject to, Presbytery. He "may, at the expiration of one year, unless he gives satisfactory evidence of repentance, be deposed without further trial." *

May a Minister who has been received by a Presbytery be deposed by another denomination?

After his reception by a Presbytery, the denomination from which he came has no jurisdiction over him.†

What is the fourth power of Presbytery?

"*To examine and approve or censure the records of church Sessions.*"

How often must this examination be made?

"At least once a year." ‡ "If the lower judicatory shall omit to send up its records for this purpose, the higher may require them to be produced either immediately or at a specified time, as circumstances may determine." § The right of 'General Review and Control' does not extend to statistical items of baptism and administration of the Lord's Supper, inserted for record and convenience of reference, in chronological order, between the minutes of actual proceedings. Nor "can the Presbytery pass rules for the conduct of church Sessions, and then take exceptions to the proceedings of church Sessions that are not according to said rules, when the rules are not prescribed by our 'Form of Government' or 'Book of Discipline.'" ||

What is the object of this examination?

To ascertain, First, whether the proceedings have been

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 661; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 40.

† *Ibid.*, p. 212.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 173. See p. 172.

§ *Book of Discipline*, sect. 71; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 255, 678.

|| *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 688.

constitutional and regular; secondly, whether they have been wise, equitable and for the edification of the Church; thirdly, whether they have been correctly recorded.*

What is the effect of approval?

It confirms the action of the Session. The record cannot afterward be changed save by the Presbytery. An error can be corrected only by the highest court which has endorsed the mistake.† The right of appeal, either from a part of the proceedings of a judicatory or from a definite sentence, cannot be in any way affected by the approval of the minutes of the judicatory against the action of which the appeal or complaint may be taken.‡

What is the effect of disapproval?

The exceptions are to be carefully noted in the Session-book and in the minutes of the Presbytery.§ The Session may be required to review and correct its proceedings. But no judicial decision shall be reversed unless by complaint or appeal. If irregular proceedings be found very injurious, the Session "must be required to review and correct or reverse them, and report, within a specified time, its obedience to the order; *provided*, however, that no judicial decision shall be reversed, unless regularly taken up by appeal or complaint."§

May members of Session vote on their own records?

Members of a court cannot vote on the approval of their own record by a superior court.‖

May a restored Minister demand that the records of his case be closed to inspection?

"The records of our church courts are public and not

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 72; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 681.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 680.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 687. See p. 191.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 688; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 74.

‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 688; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 73.

private documents, and therefore no one who has been under discipline can demand that anything pertaining to his case shall be closed to inspection or transcript. Yet a wise Christian charity would suggest that when the end of discipline in the restoration of an offender has been reached, no further publicity, if possible, should be given to the matter." *

What is the fifth power of Presbytery?

"*To resolve questions of doctrine or discipline seriously and reasonably proposed.*" It cannot change the forms of doctrine or of discipline, but it can declare the meaning and application of the standards of our Church in reply to overtures from the Session. These deliverances, however, are binding only over the churches under the care of that Presbytery, and may be reversed by the higher courts on review or on complaint. The Presbytery may also assent to or dissent from any change in the standards contained in overtures sent down by the General Assembly. A majority of the Presbyteries is necessary for the adoption of such proposed changes.†

What is the sixth power of Presbytery?

"*To condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the Church.*" This power is subject to the same limitations as the preceding.

What is the seventh power of Presbytery?

"*To visit particular churches, for the purpose of inquiring into their state, and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them.*" This may be done (1) on the petition of the Session or of any person or persons in the church; (2) or without any such request, the Presbytery having

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 655.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xxiii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 156. See p. 297.

reason to believe that there may be evils that need its influence to redress; or (3) in the exercise of its duty of oversight of the churches. This visitation may be made by the Presbytery as a body, by a commission or by a committee. The evils are to be removed by the Presbytery through the Session, to which body the members of the church are primarily responsible.* An Elder may be, by advice of Presbytery, with or without his consent, retired from the active duties of his office.† If the visit is by a committee, the power of the committee depends upon the will of the Presbytery.

What is the eighth power of Presbytery?

"*To unite or divide congregations at the request of the people, to form or receive new congregations, and in general to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care.*" This section "gives the Presbytery the right to exercise control over the location of church buildings within its bounds, both in the sense of new organizations expecting to build and of old congregations proposing a change of location."‡

Has a Minister power to organize churches?

He has in frontier settlements,§ and where application to Presbytery would be exceedingly inconvenient. In all other cases it is the prerogative of Presbytery.‖

When may Presbytery organize a church?

(1) On the petition of persons residing where, in the judgment of Presbytery, a church is needed, a mission station may be opened by a Session or Presbytery; (2) on the petition (even of a minority) of an existing church, asking for a division and new organization. The petition

* See p 133. † See pp. 58, 315; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 214, 537, 538.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 219. § *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xv.
‖ See p. 31; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 119, 218.

may be denied, but no church can be divided without a request from the people.*

"Within the bounds of a Presbytery the work of the Board of Home Missions should be carried on in harmony with the Presbytery, according to the principles and rules hereinafter stated, but a discretion should be allowed to the Board in outlying districts, where direct presbyterial control is difficult or impracticable. . . . But in all questions touching the organization of churches or the character of Ministers, the Board, in case of difference between itself and the Presbytery, should abide by the final decision of the Presbytery. . . . No church shall be organized by a Missionary (of the Board) within the bounds of any Presbytery unless authority has been previously obtained from the Presbytery."†

"It is inexpedient and contrary to the expressed spirit of the Church to multiply church organizations in any field already well supplied with gospel privileges, and especially so when the churches occupying the field are closely related to us in doctrine and polity. . . . We think it unwise, and a waste of the means and power of the Church, to organize separate churches when the persons desiring such organizations are not only few in number, but may be supplied with church privileges by existing Presbyterian churches."‡ See p. 428.

Churches organized in foreign missionary-fields, where no Presbytery exists, may, with the consent of the Synod, be enrolled by the Presbytery to which the Missionary on the field belongs."‡

May the Presbytery dissolve a church?

Yes, even against the wishes of a majority of its mem-

* See pp. 31, 33; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 109, 218.
† *Ibid.*, p. 217. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

bers.* The church should have opportunity to be heard. Vacant and feeble churches should be placed in the hands of the Presbyterian Committee to be resuscitated, or, if necessary, to be stricken from the roll after the property interest has been secured.† The Presbytery must judge if the causes are sufficient to justify it in dissolving a church, and if any wrong be done to a church, its remedy is by appeal to a higher judicatory.‡ The deeds of church property should provide that in case the church should cease to exist, the property be conveyed in trust to the Board of Church Erection.§

May a church withdraw from Presbytery?

Not without the consent of Presbytery. The questions concerning property must be determined by the laws of the State.‖

May Presbytery receive and dismiss churches?

The bounds of Presbyteries are determined by the Synod. If, therefore, it is desirable to change the presbyterial connection of a church, application must be made to the Synod. If the Presbyteries belong to different Synods, the General Assembly determines the transfer.¶ The courts interested should be always officially consulted.

If a church desires to be received from another denomination, formal application should be made to Presbytery, with, if possible, a record of the approbation of the denomination from which it comes. The church, as an ecclesiastical body, may be received; all questions of property must be settled by the courts. The same rule must be observed in receiving as in dismissing a church.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 215.
† *Minutes G. A. 1893*, p. 209.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 216.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 122. See p. 37.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 214.
¶ *Ibid.*, pp. 229–239.

May the Presbytery dissolve the pastoral relation?

It alone has power to do so. It may be done (1) at the request of the pastor, (2) or of the congregation, (3) even of a minority, (4) or at the discretion of the Presbytery.*

IX. What record shall the Presbytery keep?

"*A full and fair record of their proceedings,*" which must include a narrative of the state of religion and all other papers.† This record may be kept in print, if (1) full and accurately recorded, (2) preserved in volumes and paged, (3) have blanks for correction and approval, and (4) authenticated by written signature of Stated Clerk.‡ It must be sent every year to Synod for approval, together with a report of "*licensures, ordinations, the receiving or dismissing of members, the removal of members by death, the union and division of congregations, or the formation of new ones; and in general all the important changes which may have taken place within their bounds in the course of the year.*" A report must also be made every year to the General Assembly, containing (1) "a statistical report," according to a prepared form;§ (2) "a narrative of the state of religion within the bounds of the Presbytery for the year ending April 1st."§ In 1897 two additional columns were added: Communicants "dismissed and erased" and "deceased."‖ The ecclesiastical year for these reports should close on the 31st day of March, to secure uniformity.¶ All these reports must be sent to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly by April 25th of each year. In the statistical reports the Stated Clerk of the

* *Form of Government*, ch. xvii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 579, 580. See pp. 209, 401–411.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 225. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

§ See p. 175; *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 311.

‖ *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 140. ¶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Assembly may correct obvious mistakes and supply evident omissions on explicit official information.* In 1882 the Assembly directed "that the Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries indicate, in the statistical reports, the nationality of all churches in which services are held in a foreign language, by adding to or inserting in the name of a given church the customary national name of the persons worshiping therein." † The next year it was ordered "that the statistics of the General Assembly, as found in the minutes of the same, be stereotyped for the use of this committee (on Benevolence), the statistics of each Presbytery to form a single page. That we accept the proposal of a member of this committee to print and circulate, at his own expense, for one year, copies of the statistics of each Presbytery as stereotyped, for circulation in each family of every church where the Pastor or Session will request the same. . . . . These statistics will be sent to every Pastor or Session gratis, postage paid."‡ And "that the Presbyteries prepare a distinct temperance narrative at their spring meetings, and forward the same to the Permanent Committee (on Temperance), and that this committee consider and report on the same to the next Assembly."§

The Board of Publication was directed, in printing blanks, "to submit them to the approval of that officer of the Church who is specially responsible for the same, and in particular that the blanks for Congregational and Presbyterial statistics be approved by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly."‖

X. What meetings shall the Presbytery hold?

"*It shall meet at its own adjournment.*" It is usual to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 225. † *Ibid.*, p. 224.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 642. § *Ibid.*, p. 656. ‖ *Ibid., 1885*, p. 625.

have stated meetings; the number of these is determined by the necessities of the case. Most Presbyteries hold two. City Presbyteries often have monthly meetings. Some hold short intermediate meetings to prevent the frequency of *pro re nata* meetings. When it is necessary to change the place of an appointed meeting, the Stated Clerk can, at the request of three-fourths of the Clerks of Sessions, secure a place and give proper notice.*

What is a "pro re nata" meeting?

It is a special meeting. "*When any emergency shall require a meeting sooner than the time to which it stands adjourned, the Moderator, or, in case of his absence, death or inability to act, the Stated Clerk, shall, with the concurrence or at the request of two Ministers and two Elders, the Elders being of different congregations, call a special meeting. For this purpose he shall send a circular letter, specifying the particular business of the intended meeting, to every Minister belonging to the Presbytery and to the Session of every vacant congregation, in due time previous to the meeting, which shall not be less than ten days. And nothing shall be transacted at such special meeting besides the particular business for which the judicatory has been thus convened.*" The Moderator calling the meeting must be one chosen at a stated meeting. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1842, and in 1856 that applicants for a *pro re nata* meeting may specify the time and place, which the Moderator cannot change.* The Moderator must call a *pro re nata* meeting when formally requested to do so.† "Only such action should be had at a *pro re nata* meeting as is essential to complete the business directly connected with that named in the call for said meeting."†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 226, 227. † *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 133.

When may "pro re nata" meetings be called?

They may be called "on account of important occurrences unknown at their last meeting, and which cannot be safely deferred till their stated meeting." Deferred judicial business is not proper for such meetings, except when it appears that "some principal things upon which the judgment depends may be then had, and cannot be obtained if it is deferred till the stated meeting."*

What is an adjourned meeting?

It is a continuation of a meeting of Presbytery. It may be at another place, and after days, weeks or even months have passed, but the time and place must be provided for before the adjournment. No call or notice or circular letter is necessary, unless required by a special resolution. The object of an adjourned meeting is to complete the business before Presbytery. This becomes necessary when (1) the members must return home before finishing the docket; (2) when some other time or place is more convenient; (3) when it is more orderly that part of the business should be performed elsewhere, as ordination before the congregation; (4) when better results may be obtained, as in judicial cases the court may be more undisturbed and have better access to witnesses and documents, etc.

Who may be members of an adjourned meeting?

Elders appointed to be delegates to a meeting of Presbytery should retain their seats to the end. It is not lawful for them to leave and their alternates to take their places; this is specially illegal in judicial cases. Such was the decision of the Assembly in 1827, and it is applicable to an adjourned meeting, which is but the continuation of a meeting. In 1872, however, in direct

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 226.

variance with this, the Assembly declared that a Session might send a different Elder to an adjourned meeting.* In 1878 it decided that an Elder appointed to represent the Session at Synod was not, by virtue of that appointment, also its representative at any adjourned meeting of his Presbytery held during the intervals of the sessions of Synod; yet each Session may "prescribe the particular terms for which, or times at which, its delegates shall attend as its representatives in such judicatories."† Some Sessions appoint a delegate to serve at any meetings which may be held within six months.‡

May the Synod order the Presbytery to meet?

Yes, according to the decision of the O. S. Assembly in 1848, specifying the time, place and business to be transacted. In such cases the rules for the calling of a *pro re nata* meeting must be observed, except when the Synod desires, while in session, the action of Presbytery "on business immediately connected with the proceedings of that body; in such cases the Presbytery may be required to meet at once by order of the Synod."§

Where may the Presbytery meet?

(1) Within its own bounds—sometimes in a church or hall selected by the Presbytery for its meetings, but more generally in the different churches on their invitation. (2) Without its bounds, by order of the Synod (such are of the nature of *pro re nata* meetings), or by its own order, to suit the convenience of its members.§

XI. How is the Presbytery to be opened?

"*At every meeting of Presbytery a sermon shall be delivered, if convenient; and every particular session shall be opened and closed with prayer.*" The preacher should

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 170.
† *Ibid.*, p. 171.
‡ See p. 184.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 225.

be the Moderator, or in his absence the last Moderator present; yet in 1849 the O. S. Assembly said that no principle of the constitution was violated by inviting a member of another Presbytery to preach.* "*Every particular session*" is generally understood to mean each day's session, during which recess may be taken for meals or other purposes.

May the Presbytery sit with closed doors?

"All judicatories have a right to sit in private on business which in their judgment ought not to be matter of public speculation." † In 1880 the Assembly "recommended to its subordinate judicatories that before entering upon judicial process they carefully determine what degree of privacy or publicity in the proceedings would be most conducive to the ends of justice, the peace of the Church and the spiritual benefit of the person tried." ‡ "In all cases of judicial process, the judicatory may, at any stage of the case, determine, by a vote of two-thirds, to sit with closed doors." §

How is the Presbytery to be closed?

"*Every particular session shall be closed with prayer,*" and a record of the fact must be made. At the final adjournment the Moderator, "in addition to prayer, may cause to be sung an appropriate psalm or hymn, and shall pronounce the apostolical benediction." †

XII. Who may be invited to sit as corresponding members?

"*Ministers in good standing in other Presbyteries or in sister churches, who may happen to be present, may be invited to sit with the Presbytery as corresponding members. Such members shall be entitled to deliberate and advise, but*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 227; *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. vii.
† *General Rules for Judicatories*, xxxviii. See p. 537.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 23. § *Book of Discipline*, sect. 31.

not to vote in any decision of the Presbytery." Their names and their ecclesiastical relation must be recorded.* The N. S. Assembly in 1843 recommended that no Minister should be so invited who does not belong to some body in correspondence with the Assembly; and in 1849 it unanimously decided that it was orderly to invite Ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The O. S. Assembly did not take action, but the usage has been in accord with the above. A Ruling Elder cannot be invited, nor can an Unitarian minister.*

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE SYNOD.

I. What is the Synod?

"*As a Presbytery is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a certain district, so a Synod is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries.*" The Synod is therefore a larger Presbytery. Its original title was "The Presbytery." It was recognized as possessing the powers of the subordinate Presbyteries and of supreme jurisdiction, "unlimited by written constitution and uncontrolled by a superior." Its appropriate title was "The General Presbytery." The first Synod was organized in 1717 by the three Presbyteries, which then included all the churches of the denomination. In 1725 the Synod was asked if it might be composed of delegates from the Presbyteries, and replied in the affirmative. It was voted "that the Presbytery of New Castle and Phila-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 228.

delphia do yearly delegate the half of their members to the Synod, and the Presbytery of Long Island two of their number." And it was further ordered "that all the members of the Synod do attend every third year; and that if in the interim anything of moment occur, whereby the presence of all the members may be thought necessary, they (upon notice given by the commission of Synod) shall carefully attend, notwithstanding the above delegation. And it is further agreed that every member of the Synod may attend as formerly, if they see cause." After some time the plan silently fell into disuse.* "The 'Form of Government,' as adopted in 1789, reads: 'As a Presbytery, etc., so a Synod is the convention of several Presbyteries within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries.' The Assembly of 1804 sent down an overture to the Presbyteries to change the section, so as to read as it did at the reunion (1873), and adds in a note: 'Under this section it has been doubted whether the members can proceed to business as a Synod unless there are present several Presbyteries—*i. e.* at least three Ministers from one of the existing Presbyteries and three from another. The doubt has not only caused delay in several instances, but defeated the whole business of one entire meeting. The amendment therefore goes to make a Synod consist not of Presbyteries, but, as it ought, of Bishops and Elders.' The amendment was adopted (1805, p. 333)."† In 1880 the Assembly transmitted to the Presbyteries the following overture, which, being approved by them, was, in 1881, adopted as part of the constitution: "*The Synod may be composed at its own option, with the consent of a majority of its Presbyteries, either of all the Bishops and one Elder from each congregation in its*

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 277. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 229.

district, with the same modifications as in the Presbytery, or of equal delegations of Bishops and Elders, elected by the Presbyteries on a basis and in a ratio determined in like manner by the Synod itself and its Presbyteries." * This, together with the adoption of another overture,† makes a decided change in our constitution. The first clause of this section still declares the Synod to be a larger Presbytery, composed of Bishops and delegates from Sessions. The remainder of the section permits and encourages the Synods to become provincial Assemblies, whose boundaries shall correspond with those of the several States, and whose members shall be delegates of Presbyteries which were not represented as such in Synod. The uniformity of our church courts will be lost, some Synods remaining larger Presbyteries, and others becoming provincial Assemblies.

"In the judgment of the General Assembly the act of 1881, consolidating certain Synods, affects only their boundaries, so that at their first annual meeting, and to the close thereof, said Synods must be constituted as the Synods have uniformly been constituted heretofore. Should any Synod vote to become a delegated body, its decision shall be submitted to its Presbyteries, and shall take effect when ratified by a majority thereof. This result shall be ascertained at a subsequent meeting of the Synod, or, if the Synod so provide, the result shall be certified to the Moderator and Clerks of the Synod, and by them be communicated to the several Presbyteries, as a basis for electing delegates to the ensuing or second meeting."*

The records of the consolidated Synods were directed

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 229.

† See p. 251.

to be deposited with the Stated Clerks of the Synods, which are the legal successors.*

How are Synods formed?

Synods are formed and their bounds determined by the General Assembly. In 1788 the original Synod divided itself in four—viz.: (1) of New York and New Jersey, (2) of Philadelphia, (3) of Virginia, and (4) of the Carolinas. The next year the General Assembly was formed as the highest court of the Church, according to the act passed in 1786.† After this the formation of new Synods and changes in the boundaries of Synods were effected only by the General Assembly on the petition or with the consent of the Synods interested in the changes.‡ In 1870, at the reunion of the Old and New School bodies, there were fifty-one Synods. These were by the General Assembly reorganized as thirty-four Synods, their boundaries determined and the first place of meeting of each ordered. Some changes have been since made in the boundaries, and new Synods have been formed by the Assembly, the Synods and Presbyteries interested having been consulted.§ There were in 1880 thirty-eight Synods.|| In 1879 a committee was appointed to report to the Assembly "on the propriety of the proposed changes," "looking toward the reorganization of the Synods of the Church." In 1880 the committee was continued, with instructions to report their plan anew in case of the adoption of the overture permitting Synods to be delegate bodies. The plan was, that "the boundaries of each Synod shall be made, unless obvi-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 238.
† *Ibid.*, p. 260.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 303.
§ *Ibid.*, pp. 229–238.
|| *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 461.

ously impracticable, conterminous with the boundaries of the State." The plan was adopted in 1881. Twelve of the Synods covered entire States, three extended over parts of several States, two were in foreign lands, and the rest, twenty-one in number, were in six States—New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa. These twenty-one were consolidated into six Synods The Synod of New York shall comprise all the Presbyteries in that State and the churches in the New England States and the foreign Presbyteries of Oroomiah and Siam. The Synod of Pennsylvania, the Presbyteries in that State and in the State of West Virginia and in Western Africa. The other Synods, of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, shall include all within those States. An enabling act was also passed, the plan and action to take effect on the second day of January, 1882, and these new Synods were required to meet in October, 1882, at places, and to be opened with sermons by Ministers, chosen by the Assembly.* Several of these Synods soon became delegated bodies. By this consolidation the number of the Synods was reduced to twenty-three. In 1883 the Presbytery of Alaska was formed and added to the Synod of Columbia, and the Synod of Colorado was divided to erect that of Utah. In 1884 the Synod of Dakota was formed, and in 1888 was called that of Southern Dakota. In 1885 that of Northern Dakota was formed, in 1887 of Indian Territory and of Catawba, in 1889 of New Mexico, and in 1890 of Washington. In 1891 the Synod of Columbia became that of Oregon, and in 1892 that of Pacific became Synod of California. Montana was formed in 1893, Kentucky in 1894, and Northern

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 230–238.

China in 1897. We have at present (1898) thirty-two Synods, and these contain two hundred and twenty-eight Presbyteries.*

Can a Synod refuse to receive any member of one of its Presbyteries?

Ministers are primarily responsible to their Presbyteries. The Synod must receive all who are reported by the Presbyteries to be members in good standing. It has no power to order the lower courts to erase names from their rolls.†

What is the ratio of the representation of Elders in Synod?

The same as in the Presbytery.‡ Or, "*of equal delegations of Bishops and Elders, . . . in a ratio determined . . . by the Synod itself and its Presbyteries.*"

II. What constitutes a quorum?

"*Any seven Ministers belonging to the Synod, who shall convene at the time and place of meeting, with as many Elders as may be present, shall be a quorum to transact synodical business; provided not more than three of the said Ministers belong to the same Presbytery.*" If such a quorum be not present, the proceedings are invalid, except as to the choice of a time and place for the next meeting. The Synod may afterward adopt or reject these proceedings.§ The retirement of members required by the Book of Discipline in sections 90 and 98 does not destroy the quorum.§

Is it necessary that any Elders should be present?

Judging from the decisions of the General Assembly in regard to the quorum of Presbyteries,|| seven Minis-

* *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 735. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 683.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. x., sects. ii., iii., iv., v. See pp. 184, 186, 187, 242.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 239, 240. || See p. 189.

ters would form a quorum of Synod. The Southern Presbyterian Church says: "Any seven Ministers belonging to it (the Synod) who shall convene at the time or place of meeting, with at least three Ruling Elders, shall be a quorum; provided not more than three of the said Ministers belong to one Presbytery."*

May the Synod hold a meeting on the Sabbath?

Synods have been censured for so doing, even when very little business was transacted.†

If there be no quorum present at the time and place appointed, what may be done?

"Any two members shall be competent to adjourn from time to time, that an opportunity may be given for a quorum to assemble."‡ Less than a quorum can transact no business, save to appoint the time and place of the next meeting. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1856.† Those present may deem it best to attend to certain matters, and their action may be approved and adopted as the act of Synod at its next meeting.§

What is the remedy if the Synod fail to meet at the time and place appointed?

(1) Those who do meet may adjourn to some other time and place.|| (2) "The Moderator ought to be considered competent to call a meeting," "giving due notice by a circular letter to the Moderators of the several Presbyteries." He is "competent to fix any time and place he may judge proper for convening the body. And if he be absent, the members present shall represent the matter

* *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. v., sub-sect. ii.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 243.
‡ *General Rules for Judicatories*, iii. See p. 531.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 240. See pp. 128, 129.
|| See p. 246.

speedily to him, that he may act accordingly." * (3) Or the General Assembly may order the Synod to meet, and may determine the time and place.†

May the time or place of the next meeting of Synod be changed after its adjournment?

It may be done by the General Assembly on a petition of one of the Presbyteries. This was done in 1873 as to the time of meeting. The O. S. Assembly changed the place of the Synod's meeting on petition of a Presbytery in 1842. The Moderator of Synod has no such power. † It sometimes happens, however, that a change as to time or place is necessary, and that the Assembly does not meet, so that the above remedy cannot be applied. In such cases either of the following plans of procedure may be adopted: (1) A quorum may assemble at the time and place appointed and immediately adjourn, as the Moderator may suggest. Notice may be given to the Moderators of the several Presbyteries or to the members of the change, so that the whole body may assemble immediately after the adjournment of the quorum. This may be done, according to the decision of the O. S. Assembly, even by less than a quorum.‡ (2) A *pro re nata* meeting of Synod may be called by the Moderator for the purpose of making the change. § (3) The Moderator may call the Synod to meet at a different time or place. The Synod may thus meet, hear his reasons for making the change, and, if these be approved, may proceed with its business, reporting to the next General Assembly the facts in the case, petitioning that body to legalize the meeting and to recognize and confirm their actions.† Thus in 1882 the Synod of New

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 241.
† *Ibid.*, p. 242.
‡ See p. 247.
§ See p. 249.

York asked "the Assembly to acknowledge and authorize the regularity of a meeting of the Synod which was held at Peekskill in October, 1880, instead of Newburyport, according to previous adjournment. Reasons beyond the control of Synod made the change necessary, and the action of the Synod was unanimously approved by its own members." The action of the Synod was legalized. The same year, at the request of two Presbyteries, the General Assembly changed the time of meeting of the Synod of Ohio "to avoid conflict with the time designated for the State election."*

In 1884 the Assembly declared "whenever, from any cause, it shall be necessary to change the place of the regularly-appointed meeting of a Synod, its Stated Clerk shall, at the request of the Stated Clerks of at least three-fourths of its Presbyteries, be authorized to secure another place of meeting and to issue his official call for the meeting of the Synod accordingly."*

Can the Moderator call a special meeting?

There is no such special provision in the "Form of Government." But the General Assembly determined (in 1796) that special meetings are constitutional, and confirmed this in 1829 and 1832, and the N. S. Assembly in 1855.† Judging from "Form of Government," ch. x., sects. vii. and x., and the change in the constitution proposed in 1832, it would seem that the Moderator of Synod should call a *pro re nata* meeting at the request of three Ministers and three Elders, and that these Ministers should not be all from the same Presbytery. The notice should be sent to all the Ministers and churches of the Synod. The notice must specify the object of the meeting, and

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 242.

† *Ibid.*, p. 240.

nothing can be done which is not specified in the call, as the Synod is a larger Presbytery, the provision of Form of Government, chapter x., for the calling of *pro re nata* meetings of Presbytery, would seem to authorize those of the Synod. And the powers given to Moderators include that of calling such meetings.*

III. May corresponding members be received?

"*The same rule as to corresponding members, which was laid down with respect to the Presbytery, shall apply to the Synod.*" They should be introduced as members of ——— Synod, or if belonging to other denominations the name of the ecclesiastical body with which they are connected should be mentioned and recorded.‡

IV. What are the powers of Synod?

(1) "*The Synod has power to receive and issue all appeals regularly brought up from the Presbyteries.*"

(2) "*To decide all references made to them.*"

(3) "*To review the records of Presbyteries, and approve or censure them.*"

(4) "*To redress whatever has been done by Presbyteries contrary to order.*"

(5) "*To take effectual care that Presbyteries observe the constitution of the Church.*"

(6) "*To erect new Presbyteries, and unite or divide those which were before erected.*"

(7) "*Generally to take such order with respect to the Presbyteries, Sessions and people under their care as may be in conformity with the word of God and the established rules, and which tend to promote the edification of the Church.*"

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 240; *Form of Government*, ch. xix., sect. ii.

† *Ibid.*, p. 243. See p. 240.

(8) "*To propose to the General Assembly for their adoption such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church.*"

What effect has the decision of the Synod in appeal cases?

The same as in Presbytery. The decisions are not advisory, but authoritative. It may be either to confirm or reverse, in whole or in part, the decision of the inferior judicatory; or to remit the cause for the purpose of amending the record, should it appear incorrect or defective, or for a new trial.* In 1881 this section was changed, making the Synod in certain cases a court of final appeal, "*Its decisions on appeals, complaints and references which do not affect the doctrine or constitution of the Church being final.*"† The next year this was enforced. "The Judicial Committee are unable to find from the complaint that the decision of the Synod affects the doctrine or the constitution of the Church, nor can they find in the statement of the action of the Synod anything which was not within their discretion; and therefore no case is presented which the Assembly can properly entertain and review."‡

In 1885 the Assembly resolved "that, in view of the importance of the judicial decisions made by Synods and synodical commissions, the Synods are enjoined to send up to the Assembly, in special communications, all records of such decisions."§

Wherein does the Synod differ from the lower courts?

It is a court of appeal. It has no original jurisdiction, either over Ministers, as the Presbytery has, or

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 99. See p. 198.

† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 74; *1881*, p. 522.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 246, 723–729. § *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 662.

over the Elders and communicants, as the Session has.* It cannot institute judicial process, and can consider such only on review, reference or complaint, or appeal from the Presbyteries.†

May the Synod discipline a member for absence?

The Assembly took exceptions to a resolution of a Synod to make a Minister liable to suspension without trial if absent for three years from its meeting without sending his reasons.‡ The Synod has no original jurisdiction over Ministers or Elders. If the members neglect its meetings or fail in their duty, they must be reported to the courts to which they are responsible.§ But the Synod, as the G. Assembly, may expel a member for contempt or disorderly conduct.‖

What power has the Synod over the Presbyteries?

The power of "review and control" in the annual examination of their records—of deciding on references, appeals and complaints orderly brought from the Presbyteries. The Synod may change the boundaries of the Presbyteries. Those interested should be consulted, yet the Synod has full power to act even when they remonstrate. "If a judicatory is at any time well advised of any unconstitutional proceedings of the lower judicatory, the latter shall be cited to appear, at a specified time and place, to produce the records, and to show what it has done in the matter in question; after which, if the charge be sustained, the whole matter shall be concluded by the judicatory itself, or be remitted to the lower judicatory, with direction as to its disposition."¶ The Synod

* *Form of Government*, chs. ix., x., xi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 244.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 244; *Book of Discipline*, ch. ix.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 256. § See pp. 167, 185.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 299. ¶ *Book of Discipline*, sects. 75, 76.

may cite the Presbytery also in case of neglects, omissions or irregularities.*

Can the Synod order a Presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relation?

The Presbytery alone can form or dissolve a pastoral relation.† If the Presbytery refuse, the decision may on complaint be reversed by Synod.‡

How are references, appeals and complaints to be considered by Synod?

In the same manner as in Presbytery.§ The Synod cannot order an inferior court to rehear a case already decided when no intimation of additional evidence is given. "Nor in sending back a case can the Synod pass by the Presbytery in which the case has once been adjudicated."‖ All the decisions made by Synod are subject to review by the General Assembly.¶ See p. 190.

May Synod try an appeal by commission?

In 1880 the Assembly recognized the right of the Synod to do so, with consent of parties.** In 1885 chapter xiii. was added to the "Book of Discipline," which was amended in 1894, and now reads: (118) "The General Assembly, each Synod, and each Presbytery under its care, shall have power to appoint Judicial Commissions from their respective bodies, consisting of Ministers and Elders, in numbers not less than eighteen from the General Assembly, not less than twelve from any Synod and not less than seven from any Presbytery. (119) All judicial cases may be submitted to such Commission, and their decisions shall be subject to reversal only

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 76; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 692.
† See p. 209.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 245, 579.
§ See p. 194.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 34.
¶ See p. 258.
** See pp. 196, 226.

by the superior judicatory or judicatories, except in matters of law, which shall be referred to the appointing judicatory for adjudication; and also all matters of Constitution and doctrine may be reviewed in the appointing body and by the superior judicatory or judicatories. (120) Such Commissions shall sit at the same time and place as the body appointing them, and their findings shall be entered upon the minutes of the appointing body; *Provided*, however, that a Commission appointed by a Presbytery may also sit during the intervals between the meetings of the appointing Presbytery. The quorum of any such Commission shall not be less in number than three-fourths of the members appointed, and shall be the same in all other respects as the quorum of the appointing judicatory." *

To this section of the "Form of Government" was added: "*Provided, that in the trial of judicial cases the Synod shall have power to act by commission, in accordance with the provisions on the subject of Judicial Commissions in the 'Book of Discipline.'*" †

It is not competent for a Synod in ordinary session to interpret or modify a judicial decision.‡

What power has the Synod over an extinct Presbytery?

It has supervision of its Ministers.§

What power has it in regard to the General Assembly?

It may send overtures endorsed by it, or endorse those sent by its Presbyteries. With other Synods it may urge the same overture. "An overture coming from a private individual, instead of from a lower judicatory, should not be regarded as properly before the Assembly." "The General Assembly has decided

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. xiii.
† *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 637.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1896*, p. 152.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 203.

that all overtures shall come to it through Presbyteries or Synods, and not through individuals or Sessions,"* except those on personal matters.†

What relation has the Synod to the Boards?

These are the creation of the Assembly, and are accountable to it. In 1880 the Assembly resolved "that the Boards of the Church be directed to make annually, to each of the Synods, detailed reports of their work within its bounds; and that each Synod, carefully considering its own condition and wants, be directed to report to the General Assembly any suggestions or propositions with reference to the work of the Boards within its bounds as may seem to it wise; and that these suggestions or propositions be referred by the General Assembly to its Standing Committees respectively."‡

"Each Synod shall appoint a Home Missionary Committee, to consist of the chairmen of the presbyterial committees within its bounds. The committee shall meet annually, near or during the meeting of the Synod. It shall be the duty of the committee to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the whole number of churches and missionary-fields needing aid within the bounds of the Synod, and, as nearly as possible, equalize the salaries of Missionaries in the Presbyteries. They shall ascertain the amount it will be fair to expect for the work of Home Missionaries from the churches of the Synod, and, as nearly as possible, determine the amount of aid that will be likely to be asked for the support of missionary work within the bounds of the Synod. The committee shall confer, when practicable, with representatives of the Board. These synodical committees shall, as soon

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 290.

† *Ibid.*, p. 292.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 74.

as possible after the meeting of the Synod, report to the Board the necessities of the fields and the probable amount of money required, together with the probable contributions from the Synods to the Board. The reports of the synodical committees shall be sent every year to the Assembly, and be referred either to a special committee or to the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Home Missions. The committee, after consulting the wants of the whole field, as they shall be set forth in the reports from the various Synods, shall make their report to the Assembly, with such recommendations as the exigencies of the work may seem in their judgment to require." * Annual Synodical missionary conventions were recommended.†

In 1881 the Assembly approved of the action of the Board of Home Missions employing superintendents of missions, especially on the frontier, in co-operation with Synods and Presbyteries within their bounds. They were called supervisory Missionaries, and later synodical Missionaries.‡ They should hold to the Board the same relation as its other Missionaries. Presbytery has full control over its Ministers and churches. The Synodical Missionaries not officially superior in authority to Presbytery, nor can they act independently.§

V. How often shall the Synod meet?

"*At least once each year.*" Adjourned meetings may be held, and *pro re nata* meetings. See page 249.

Business meetings cannot be held on the Sabbath.‖

How shall its meetings be opened?

"*At the opening of which a sermon shall be delivered by the Moderator, or in case of his absence by some other mem-*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 347. † *Minutes G. A. 1894*, pp. 150, 157.
‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 534. § *Ibid., 1898*, p. 143. ‖ *Ibid., 1893*, p. 213.

ber." This sermon is deemed necessary. Synods have been reproved by the General Assembly for its omission, and even its postponement "to the following evening."*

How shall its Sessions be opened?

"*Every particular Session shall be opened and closed with prayer.*" The record must notice the fact.* A recess does not imply the close of a session.

How shall the Synod close its meeting?

"With singing, prayer and the apostolic benediction."†

VI. What record shall the Synod keep?

"*It shall be the duty of the Synod to keep a full and fair record of its proceedings.*" Absentees must be recorded and all the changes in the Presbyteries.‡ In 1874 it was declared to be "contrary to the spirit and principles of the Presbyterian Church, and subversive of the true design of ecclesiastical discipline, for a superior judicatory to compel an inferior court to reverse its decision, rendered after full, fair and impartial trial, without assigning and placing on record some specific reason for such reversal." § In 1878 the Assembly made exceptions to its approval of the minutes of a Synod because, although the reasons of vote on a complaint were given, "the subject-matter of the said complaint is not recorded. This defect disables the Assembly from deciding as to the validity of the reasons given for the vote of the Synod in the case." "It does not appear from their records whether the Synod took further action upon said complaint than to vote upon it and give reasons for that vote; thereby leaving the Assembly in doubt whether the Presbytery

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 246.

† *General Rules for Judicatories*, xliv.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 256. § *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 86.

complained of was censured, or whether the matter of the complaint was referred back to them for readjudication, or whether the Synod dropped it entirely."* The absentees must be recorded,† judicial cases stated, and overtures answered described. The pages must be numbered. The record should show all changes in the Presbyteries and adopted reports, and must be approved by the Synod and attested by the Stated Clerk.‡

How often must the records be inspected?

The Synod shall "*submit them annually to the inspection of the General Assembly, and report to the Assembly the numbers of its Presbyteries and of the members and alterations of the Presbyteries.*" The object of this inspection is the same as that of the examination by Presbytery of the records of Session.§ A decision cannot be reversed in review of records.‖ If the records be not presented, the Synod may be reminded by the General Assembly of this neglect of duty, or the Synod may be directed to call their Stated Clerk to account for not having sent their records to the Assembly.§

May copies of the Synodical record be sent for review?

In 1790 attested copies were declared allowable when it was found inconvenient to send the books; but in 1841 the O. S. Assembly rescinded this permission, and in 1847 the same body required the production of the records themselves. In 1871, however, the Assembly accepted a translated copy of the Synod of China.¶ In 1878 a printed English translation of the Synod of India was approved, while the records of the Synod of Atlantic were censured for containing pages of printed matter setting forth the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 250.
† *Ibid.*, p. 256.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 252.
§ See p. 172.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 691.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 681.

acts of Synod, and were required to write the record and present it the next year for approval.*

In 1884 the Assembly recommended "that any Synod, which shall so elect, be authorized to keep its minutes in printed form, and to dispense with written records; *provided* (1) that such printed minutes be complete and accurate in all details; (2) that they be uniform as to size of page with the minutes of the Assembly; (3) that the copy submitted by each Synod to the Assembly for review be attested by the certificate of the Stated Clerk of the Synod in writing; and that blank pages be left at the end for recording any exceptions that may be taken; (4) that at least two additional copies of each and every issue be transmitted to the Stated Clerk of the Assembly, and two deposited in the library of the Presbyterian Historical Society."†

The official relation of the Stated Clerk terminates in his removal beyond the bounds of Synod, and the records, etc., should go to the Permanent Clerk until a successor be elected.‡

What other reports must the Synod make?

(1) A report of all the changes in the Presbyteries. (2) A statistical report of the Ministers, churches, Licentiates, Candidates within their bounds, and how distributed, the changes in the number and arrangements of their Presbyteries, the names of the Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries, the place and hour of the next stated meeting, and the name of the Moderator and Stated Clerk of Synod.† (3) A narrative of the state of religion within its bounds. This must be sent to the Assembly and recorded in the minutes of Synod.‡

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 52. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 258.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

I. What is the General Assembly?

It "*is the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church.*"

In what sense is it the highest judicatory?

It is the highest and final court of appeal. Judicial cases arising in the Session may be rejudged in the Presbytery, and again in the Synod, these bodies representing larger and still larger portions of the church. When such cases are brought before the General Assembly, which represents the whole Church, they are finally disposed of. Even future Assemblies cannot reverse the decisions thus given.*

What does it represent?

"*It shall represent in one body all the particular churches of this denomination.*" These churches, however, are represented by commissioners from the Presbyteries to which they belong.†

What is its legal title?

It "*shall bear the title of* THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

The early Presbyterian churches in this country formed about 1704 "The Presbytery." It claimed jurisdiction "alike unlimited by a written constitution and uncontrolled by a superior." Its proper title was "The General Presbytery." In 1716 it divided itself into four subordinate Presbyteries, and the General Presbytery assumed the title of Synod. In 1788 the Synod divided itself into four Synods, and it was resolved "that

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 689. † See p. 552.

out of the body of these Synods a General Assembly shall be constituted, . . . and that the judicatory thus constituted shall bear the style and title of *the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.*"* At the disruption in 1838 each branch claimed that its highest court was the true successor of the General Assembly of 1837, and therefore had the right to this title. The civil courts decided in favor of that branch which was commonly called the Old School.† At the reunion in 1869 the old title was retained, and the Assembly of 1870 was declared to be the true successor of the Assemblies of 1869 of the Old and New School churches.‡ In 1858 the Southern Synods of the N. S. Assembly separated themselves from that body, and formed a Church whose highest court was called "*The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church.*"§ In 1861 the Southern Synods, in connection with the O. S. Assembly, organized themselves into a separate Church, whose highest judicatory now bears the title of "*The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.*"|| The United Synod united with the Southern Assembly in 1864.

What are the radical principles of the Presbyterian Church polity and discipline?

1. "The several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ, called emphatically the Church."

2. "A larger part of the Church, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein."

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 260.
† *Ibid.*, p. 31.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 39.
§ *New Digest*, p. 565.
|| *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. vi.

3. "In like manner a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united; that is, that a majority shall govern, and consequently that appeals may be carried from lower to higher judicatories till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church."

"For these principles, and this procedure, the example of the Apostles and the practice of the primitive Church are considered as authority. (See Acts 15 : 1–29, and the proofs adduced under the last three chapters.)"*

When was the first General Assembly held?

In 1789, on the third Thursday in May, at 11 A. M., in the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. Usage has fixed the above as the time for the annual meeting. The Assembly met in Philadelphia from 1789 until 1843, except five times, and since 1843 it has accepted invitations from year to year, and sometimes has selected a place of meeting without an invitation.† A committee was often appointed to report on invitations or to propose a place of meeting. In 1881 it was resolved that the Moderator and the Stated and Permanent Clerks be appointed a committee to report from year to year on the place of the meeting of the next ensuing Assembly.‡ The first Assembly was opened with a sermon by Rev. John Witherspoon, D. D., who acted as Moderator until the election of Rev. John Rogers, D. D., after the organization. It consisted of twenty-three Ministers and eleven Elders. "The Presbytery" of 1704 was really a General Assembly.§ The first General Assembly in Scotland consisted of six Ministers and thirty-four other persons.§

* *Form of Government*, ch. xii., note. See p. 10.

† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 280, 854; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 333. See p. 17. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 333. § *Ibid.*, p. 1.

In 1885 the General Assembly appointed a committee to arrange for the celebration of its one hundredth anniversary.* The Southern Assembly was invited to co-operate, and appointed a committee.† The centenary was observed by raising a fund chiefly for the Board of Relief, and by services held May 24, 1888, in Philadelphia. The Presbyterians of that city brought the Southern Assembly from Baltimore and entertained them. Receptions were held the day before in the home of J. Wistar Morris and in the Academy of Fine Arts. Addresses, which were afterward printed, were delivered in two halls, morning, afternoon and evening of May 24.‡

II. Of whom shall the General Assembly consist?

"*Of an equal delegation of Bishops and Elders from each Presbytery, in the following proportion, viz.: each Presbytery consisting of not more than twenty-four Ministers shall send one Minister and one Elder; and each Presbytery consisting of more than twenty-four Ministers shall send one Minister and one Elder for each twenty-four Ministers, or for each additional fractional number of Ministers not less than twelve; and these delegates so appointed shall be styled Commissioners to the General Assembly.*" It is mandatory as to the sending of equal numbers of Ministers and Elders, and the number to which Presbytery is entitled.§

Has this always been the ratio of representation?

In 1786 it was determined that each Presbytery of not more than six Ministers should send one Minister and one Elder, and those which had more than six and less than twelve should send two Ministers and two Elders. In 1819 the ratio was changed by substituting the words

* *Minutes G. A. 1886*, p. 16. † *Ibid., 1887*, p. 57.

‡ *Ibid., 1888*, pp. 24, 33, 44, 74, 136, 148.

nine for six, and eighteen for twelve. In 1826 these numbers were changed to twelve and twenty-four, and in 1833 to twenty-four or a fraction.* Since the reunion in 1869 the General Assembly has been so large that a further change seemed necessary. Several propositions have been made in vain.† These plans were (1) to increase the ratio of representation; or (2) to retain the present ratio, but omit from the constituency all Ministers except Pastors and Missionaries; or (3) to require the smaller Presbyteries to be represented alternately each year by a Minister or an Elder, and the other Presbyteries for every twenty Ministers by one commissioner; and when more than one is allowed to a Presbytery, they shall be as nearly as possible equally chosen from the Ministers and Elders; or (4) to substitute synodical for presbyterial representation; or (5) to increase the present ratio to one Minister and Elder for every forty Ministers, and the constituency to be only those actually engaged in ministerial work; or (6) the basis of representation to be the number of Ministers and communicants combined, two delegates to represent every twenty-five hundred. New Presbyteries not to be represented until they shall number five hundred Ministers and communicants.† In 1879 the whole question of reduced representation was indefinitely postponed. In 1881 a change was made in the constitution to relieve the Assembly of part of its work by reducing the number of the Synods, and making them in most cases courts of final appeal.‡ In 1885 the present ratio was adopted.*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 278.

† *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 522; *1876*, pp. 69, 73; *1877*, pp. 507, 552; *1878*, pp. 39, 63; *1879*, pp. 576, 578; *1880*, p. 73.

‡ See p. 251.

What is the rule concerning corresponding members?

The "Form of Government" makes no provision for them. Prior to 1791 they were occasionally received, but in that year the Assembly declared the practice unauthorized. Ministers casually present cannot be so received. The New School Assembly in 1858 gave all the privileges of corresponding members to the Secretaries of Permanent Committees and to the Clerk of the Assembly. In the reunited Church in 1870 the Secretaries of the Boards were accorded these privileges "in discussions bearing upon the interest of the Boards which they severally represent."* Delegates from corresponding body are received, but cannot vote. The Committee on Correspondence in 1881 reported "that the Assembly have enacted a rule that the practice of sending delegates to bodies represented in the Presbyterian General Alliance is no longer necessary, and therefore no delegates are nominated to them."† Where union Presbyteries in foreign lands have displaced our Presbyteries, the missions under our Board may send one Minister and one Elder as advisory members to this Assembly.‡

What special arrangement was made with the General Association of Connecticut in 1794?

In 1792 it was agreed that the General Assembly and the General Association of Connecticut should each appoint a committee of three members, "who shall have the right to sit in the other's general meeting, and make such communications as shall be directed by their respective constituents, and deliberate on such matters as may come before the body, but have no right to vote." In 1794 it was resolved that these delegates have also the right "to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 277.

† *Ibid.*, p. 310. See p. 281. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 597. See p. 184.

vote on all questions which may be determined by either of them."* In 1804 a similar agreement was ratified with the General Convention of Vermont, in 1810 with the General Association of New Hampshire, in 1811 with the General Association of Massachusetts, in 1828 with the General Conference of Maine (except that the delegates shall not have the right to vote), in 1831 with the Evangelical Consociation of Rhode Island.* The relations and rights of the delegates from the Congregational churches in Connecticut were modified by the Plan of Union adopted in 1802, which was abrogated in 1837 by the Presbyterian Church and the General Association of the Congregational Church.† In 1827 the General Assembly sent a communication to the Congregational churches of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, stating that the right to vote given to these delegates was inconsistent with our "Form of Government." Since 1830 delegates from other bodies have not had the right to vote.*

III. What is a quorum of the General Assembly?

"*Any fourteen or more of these commissioners, one-half of whom shall be Ministers, being met on the day and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.*" If a quorum be not present, the commissioners may adjourn from time to time, as in case of less than a quorum of Presbytery and Synod.‡ The quorum may, as in Presbytery and Synod, be formed without an Elder.§ The Southern Church requires to form a quorum "eighteen commissioners, of whom one-half shall be Ministers, and at least five shall be Ruling Elders."‖

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 277. † See p. 277.
‡ See pp. 189, 247; *General Rules for Judicatories*, iii. See p. 531.
§ See pp. 188, 246. ‖ *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. vi.

IV. What are the powers of the General Assembly?

"*The General Assembly shall—*

1. "*Receive and issue all appeals, complaints and references that shall affect the doctrine or constitution of the Church, which may be regularly brought before them from the inferior judicatories.*"

2. "*They shall review the records of every Synod, and approve or censure them.*"

3. "*They shall give their advice and instruction in all cases submitted to them in conformity with the constitution of the Church.*"

4. "*They shall constitute the bond of union, peace, correspondence and mutual confidence among all our churches.*"

(For other powers see p. 270.)

How does the General Assembly differ from the lower courts?

1. It represents the whole Church.

2. It is the highest and final court of appeal.

3. It alone can interpret the laws of the Church.

4. It alone can make or change (with consent of the Presbyteries) constitutional laws.

5. It is the bond of union of the churches and the agent of correspondence with other denominations.

6. It superintends the benevolence of the Church.

7. It provides for the increase of the Ministry.

8. It is not a permanent body; it adjourns *sine die*, calling a new Assembly to meet the next year.

Has it any original jurisdiction?

"The Assembly of the Church of Scotland has ever claimed and exercised original jurisdiction, acting as the Presbytery of the whole Church."* In a few cases our

* *Church Polity*, p. 415.

Assembly has cited courts and Ministers. The O. S. Assembly expelled a Commissioner for slandering another.* See pages 273, 274.

What appeals, etc. may it receive?

"Appeals are, generally, to be taken to the judicatory immediately superior to that appealed from." † A complaint from one Presbytery against another of a different Synod should go directly to the Assembly.‡ In special cases the Assembly has received appeals from Presbyteries. In 1883, 1885 and 1892 appeals direct from Presbytery were entertained.§ Overtures should not be sent by lower courts to influence the higher in a pending judicial case.‖ In 1881 the Synod was made a court of final appeal in some cases,¶ and the clause was added to this section limiting appeals, complaints and references to be brought before the Assembly to those "*that affect the doctrine and constitution of the Church.*"

What is the court of final appeal?

A court whose decisions cannot be reviewed. The Synod in some cases, and the General Assembly in others, are courts of final appeal.¶ It also denotes a new court proposed to the Assembly in 1873. The next year a majority and a minority report were made and referred to the next Assembly. It was reported each year until 1878, when the Assembly appointed a special committee to revise the "Form of Government" and "Book of Discipline," and referred to it these reports on the Court of Final Appeal. In 1880 this committee printed the "Revised Book of Discipline," which they reported to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 299.
† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 102.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 697.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 782.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 289.
¶ See p. 251.

the Assembly and sent to Ministers and Sessions, to show the progress made and to invite criticisms. In 1881 they presented a "second revision." In this revision the proposed Court of Final Appeal became "The Judicial Commission," one-third of whose members was to be elected each year, to report on all appeals, etc., presenting a formal finding of facts, and enter judgment, which shall become final on the approbation of the Assembly.* The final report in 1883 omitted this chapter.

May the Assembly try cases by a commission?

"The practice of appointing judicial commissions by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church is an inheritance from the Church of Scotland; . . . . the practice has continued by consent of parties in the absence of constitutional authority." A committee was appointed to prepare an amendment to the "Book of Discipline" on this subject, which reported in 1877, when the matter was referred to the Committee on the Revision of the "Book of Discipline." Owing to the action of the Assembly in 1881, this committee, in its final report, made no provision for such commission. In 1884 an overture was prepared and sent to the Presbyteries, and the next year was approved and made part of the Constitution. It is as follows:

"The General Assembly and each Synod under its care shall have power to appoint a judicial commission from their respective bodies, consisting of Ministers and Elders, in number not less than a quorum of the judicatory appointing. All judicial cases may be submitted to this commission, and its decisions shall be final except in matters of law, which shall be referred to the appointing

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, pp. 69, 164; *1877*, pp. 571, 572; *1880*, p. 36; *1881*, pp. 528, 573. See p. 296. See Second Revision of B. of D.

court for final adjudication; and also all matters of Constitution and doctrine, which may be reviewed in the appointing body, and upon final adjudication by the General Assembly. This commission shall sit at the same time and place as the body appointing it, and its findings shall be entered upon the minutes of such body." This was made the thirteenth chapter of the "Book of Discipline." * This was amended in 1894. See page 253.

The following was added to ch. xii., sect. iv., of the "Form of Government:"

"*Provided, that in the trial of judicial cases the General Assembly shall have power to act by commission, in accordance with the provisions on the subject of judicial commissions in the 'Book of Discipline.'*" *

How often must the Synodical Records be examined?

Every year. If not presented, the Assembly may require the Synod to censure its Stated Clerk.† This examination is made by a committee, who report the result to the Assembly. In 1880 it was determined that the Committees on Synodical Records shall consist of five members, instead of two, as had been the custom. They now consist of four Ministers and three Elders.‡

V. What other powers has the Assembly?

"*To the General Assembly also belongs the power—*

5. "*Of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline.*"

6. "*Of reproving, warning or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, Presbytery or Synod.*"

7. "*Of erecting new Synods when it may be judged necessary.*"

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 657; *1884*, p. 88; *1885*, p. 637.

† See p. 258. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 277.

8. "*Of superintending the concerns of the whole Church.*"

9. "*Of corresponding with foreign churches on such terms as may be agreed upon by the Assembly and the corresponding body.*"

10. "*Of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations.*"

11. "*And, in general, of recommending and attempting reformation of manners, and the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under their care.*"

Can the Assembly answer questions in "thesi"?

"It does not appear that the constitution ever designed that the General Assembly should ever take up abstract cases and decide on them, especially when the object appears to be to bring these decisions to bear on particular individuals not judicially before the Assembly."*

What authority have the decisions of the Assembly?

Even its recommendations are of authority, coming as they do from a body representing the whole Church. Its recommendations concerning the Boards are obligatory. Its replies to overtures are authoritative interpretations of the constitution. Its testimony on doctrine and morality is the Church's declaration of the meaning of the "Confession of Faith," and its application. And its judicial decisions are final and obligatory in all similar cases. No later Assembly can reverse its judicial acts or revise its proceedings. A manifest error may be corrected.†

How are controversies respecting doctrine and discipline to be brought before the Assembly?

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 279.

† *Ibid.*, p. 689.

By review, reference, appeal or complaint.* Before the reunion all appeals, etc. were brought before the Assembly itself, except in a few cases. Since 1869, owing to the size of the Assembly and the increasing press of business, they were with consent of parties, referred to commissions appointed by the Assembly.† See p. 269.

Concerning what subjects has the Assembly borne testimony?

Heresies and imperfect statements of doctrine, explication of doctrines, testimony against certain disorders and irregularities, slavery, civil war, state of the country, duty of citizens, the authority of civil government, the assassination of the President, the power of the Assembly in determining lawful judicatories, the evils of war, intemperance, the Sabbath, vices and immoralities, revivals, divorce, infanticide, operas, polygamy, use of opium, the Chinese, etc.‡

Has the Assembly any direct power over Synods?

It determines their formation and boundaries. At the reunion the Assembly erected fifty-one Synods. In 1881 the Synods were consolidated and reduced in number to twenty-three. Others have since been added. We have now thirty-two Synods. New Synods are organized by the Assembly on petition of the Presbyteries. If the Presbyteries interested have not been consulted, the petition is rejected.§ If they belong to different Synods, both must be consulted. The Assembly may dissolve a Synod and distribute its Presbyteries.¶ It may order a Synod to meet or to change its time and place of

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. ix.

† *Ibid.*, ch. xiii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 803.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 281, 293, 294. § *Ibid.*, pp. 330-333.

‖ See p. 244. ¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 299.

meeting. It may require a Synod to examine the state of religion in its bounds, and report the next year. It must examine and review the records of Synod.* It may cite Synods to appear and answer charges of irregularities in doctrine, government or discipline, and disown those which have departed from the standards of the Church.†

Has the Assembly any direct power over Presbyteries?

It may erect, modify, change and dissolve Presbyteries. In 1802 it divided the Presbytery of Albany into three new Presbyteries without the proposal being first brought before the Synod, but simply on the petition of the Presbytery. It declared, however, that this act was "not to be considered as forming a precedent for future conduct." In 1805, 1826 and 1827 Presbyteries were formed by the Assembly on petition of Ministers and churches. In 1834 it was done against the decision of the Synod, the General Assembly claiming the right under the constitution to determine the bounds of Presbyteries (1) when the question was brought by complaint or appeal; (2) under extraordinary circumstances; (3) as being the highest judicatory of the Church.‡ This power was exercised both by the O. S. and N. S. Assemblies several times, and by the reunited Church.‡ The Assembly may legalize the act of less than a quorum of Presbytery.§ It can define the succession of Presbyteries.‖ It can appoint a committee to inquire into reported irregularities.¶

* See p. 258.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 692.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 300-303.
§ See p. 189.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 305.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

What direct power has the General Assembly over Sessions and churches?

It can transfer them from one Presbytery and Synod to another. This is done on petition from the church, the Presbyteries having been consulted. Such a change can be made by the Synod when both Presbyteries interested belong to the same Synod. But when two Synods are involved, the question should be decided by the General Assembly.* It may order a Presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relation when the case has been regularly brought before it, and the peace and prosperity of the Church render this course advisable.†

What power has the Assembly over Ministers?

It may transfer them from one Presbytery to another. This is involved in the power to divide Presbyteries. This has been done by the O. S. and the N. S. Assemblies.‡ The O. S. Assembly transferred a Minister on petition when the Presbytery was without a quorum of attending Ministers.§ And again, to increase the number of a Presbytery which had failed, from want of a quorum, in two attempts to organize.‖

What power has the Assembly to establish relations with other denominations of the Christian Church?

The lower courts may receive Ministers of other bodies as corresponding members, but only as individual Ministers. This does not imply any authoritative conference, the results of which are to be binding on the different denominations. The Minister thus recognized may help the Presbytery or Synod with his advice in discussion of our own affairs. The Assembly, as the highest court and rep-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 303.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 579, 724.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 300–303.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 304.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1858*, p. 280.

resenting the whole body, is the only proper or possible organ of communication, correspondence and co-operation with other churches.* The Assembly can determine when, on what terms, and to what extent this correspondence is expedient, and when it shall terminate.† See p. 119.

With what bodies is the Assembly at present in correspondence?

1. General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.
2. General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.
3. General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
4. Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Great Britain and Ireland.
5. General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church.
6. Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland.
7. General Synod of the Reformed Church in America.
8. General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of North America.
9. General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the United States.
10. Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the Lower Provinces of British North America and the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in connection with the Church of Scotland.
11. General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

* *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. v.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 277, 306–326.

12. General Assembly of the Welsh Presbyterian Church.

13. General Synod of the Reformed Church of France.

14. National Council of the Congregational Church in the United States of America.

15. Synod of the Waldensian Church.

16. General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

17. General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United Sates.

18. Associate Reformed Synod of the South.

19. General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

20. Synod of the Free Evangelical Church of France.

21. General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.*

22. Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, which was formed by the union of the missions of the two Presbyterian Churches (U. S. A. and U. S.) in this country.†

How is the correspondence maintained?

There were three plans of correspondence: (1) by letter between committees appointed by each body; (2) by conventions composed of delegates of equal number from each; (3) by sending delegates to each body, who shall sit in their respective meetings.* But finally in 1878 it was proposed, and referred to the next Assembly, that since the different branches of the Presbyterian churches throughout the world are now associated in the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 306.

† *Minutes G. A. 1889*, pp. 115-122.

General Presbyterian Alliance, and meet in its Triennial Councils, therefore it is no longer necessary to appoint annual delegates to the several churches joined in that Alliance.* In 1879 it was resolved "that the Assembly, with the most cordial esteem for the brethren of other Presbyterian churches, will in future decline to appoint any such delegates, and content themselves with the appointment of commissioners to the General Councils of the Alliance." †

What was the plan adopted with the General Association of Connecticut?

A standing committee of correspondence was appointed by each body, to communicate by frequent letters whatever may be mutually useful and to the general interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. Each may appoint a committee of three to attend in the other's annual meeting, with right to sit, communicate and deliberate (and to vote, as afterward amended) on all subjects. Traveling Ministers shall be acknowledged on the testimonials signed by Moderator of Presbytery or Association, or a member of Standing Committee. This was in 1792.‡ Similar plans were adopted with other Congregational bodies.

What was the Plan of Union?

The General Association of Connecticut in 1801 proposed "to consider the measures proper to be adopted by the General Association and the General Assembly for establishing an uniform system of church government between the inhabitants of the new settlements who are attached to the Presbyterian form of government and those who prefer the Congregational form." The object

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 310. † See p. 265.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 513.

was "to prevent alienation, and to promote union and harmony in those new settlements which are composed of inhabitants from these bodies." The next year the Plan of Union was adopted by both denominations, and continued in operation until 1837, when it was abrogated and declared to be unconstitutional as regards the Presbyterian Church, and destitute of authority as proceeding from the General Association of Connecticut.*

Its provisions were as follows:

1. Mutual forbearance and a spirit of acommodation were enjoined on the inhabitants of new settlements preferring these different forms of church government.

2. A Congregational church with a Presbyterian Pastor shall conduct its discipline according to Congregational order; the Pastor shall, however, be subject to Presbytery. Any difficulty between Pastor and church or any member shall be referred to the Presbytery, or to a council of Presbyterians and Congregationalists in equal numbers, according to agreement of parties.

3. A Presbyterian church with a Congregational Pastor shall conduct its discipline according to Presbyterian order. Any difficulty between the Pastor and the church or any member shall be referred, according to consent of parties, to the Association or to a council of Congregationalists and Presbyterians in equal numbers.

4. A mixed church, some of whose members are Presbyterians and others Congregationalists, shall choose a standing committee of communicants to exercise the discipline of the church. If a Presbyterian be by it placed under discipline, he may appeal to the Presbytery, whose decision should be final, unless the church consent to a

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 570–581, 716; *New Digest*, pp. 453–469.

further appeal to Synod and General Assembly. If a Congregationalist be by it placed under discipline, he may appeal to the body of the male communicants of the church, and the case may be referred to trial by a mutual council. The standing committee of such a church may send to Presbytery one of their number as delegate, who shall there have the same right to sit and act as if he were a Ruling Elder. This privilege of the committee-men (unordained) to sit in Presbytery was gradually extended to apply to Synod and General Assembly. The first case reported is that of Mr. D. W. Lathrop of Ellsworth in 1820. After some hesitation he was admitted to a seat in the Assembly.*

In 1831 the Assembly declared that the appointment of committee-men as commissioners from the Presbyteries is inexpedient and of questionable constitutionality. The next year and ever after they were refused seats in the Assembly.†

This Plan of Union, though made with the General Association of Connecticut, was not confined in its operations to that State. The Synods of Western Reserve, Utica, Genesee and Geneva, and the Presbyteries under their care, were formed in accordance with this Plan of Union.‡

Has the General Assembly power to consummate organic union with churches which are in correspondence with it?

No. It may propose plans of union (this is often done on petitions from Presbyteries or Synods), and perfect them to the satisfaction of the highest court of each body, but such plans must be sent down to

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 570–574; *New Digest*, pp. 453–455.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 591.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 580, 737.

the Presbyteries for their approval before the final action of the Assembly.*

With what bodies has correspondence resulted in organic union?

1. In 1749 the Presbytery of Suffolk.†
2. In 1758 between the Synods of New York and of Philadelphia.‡
3. In 1766 the Presbytery of Dutchess county.†
4. In 1811 the Presbytery of Charleston.§
5. In 1822 the Associate Reformed Synod.‖
6. In 1852 the Charleston Union Presbytery.¶
7. In 1869 the O. S. and N. S. Assemblies.*
8. In 1885 the Philadelphia Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.**

Upon what terms did the O. S. and N. S. Assemblies unite?

1. The title shall be retained, and all legal and corporate rights held prior to the division in 1838, and all such rights held by each in 1869.

2. The common standards shall be "sincerely received and adopted as containing the system of doctrine contained in holy Scripture." The "Government" and "Discipline" "shall be approved as containing the principles and rules of our polity."

The concurrent declarations of the Assemblies were—

1. All Ministers and churches in each body shall hold their respective connections in the reunited Church.

2. Imperfectly-organized churches shall become thoroughly Presbyterian within five years. No other such churches shall hereafter be received. See page 34.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 31–42. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 562.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 613. *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 27.
§ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 564. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 565.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 789. ** *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 614.

3. Bounds of Presbyteries and Synods shall be determined by the Assembly of the reunited Church.

4. Official records of each branch shall be preserved as the one history of the Church, but no rule or precedent approved by only one shall be of authority until re-established by the reunited Church, except where the rights of property are involved.

5. Corporate rights held by each shall be consolidated.

6. The Churches shall have and sustain one set of Boards, yet be free to contribute through other channels.

7. The Boards and Permanent Committees shall be consolidated by the General Assembly.

8. The publications of each shall be issued; the Board of Publication of the reunited Church shall revise and perfect the catalogue.

9. Theological seminaries shall be under synodical or Assembly supervision.

10. It shall be the duty of all to study peace, avoiding needless references to past divisions, and conforming in practice to the general custom prior to the controversies which resulted in the separation.*

The 25th anniversary of the Reunion was celebrated at Pittsburgh, Pa., May 23d, 1895. A memorial fund of $384,000 was raised to liquidate the debts of the Boards.†

What is the Presbyterian Alliance?

In 1873 it was resolved to appoint a committee of three to correspond with other churches in this and other lands holding by the Westminster standards, "with a view of bringing about an œcumenical council of such churches, to consider subjects of common interest to all, and especially to promote harmony of action in the mission-fields at home and abroad." This committee took advantage

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 36, 37. † *Ibid.*, p. 43.

of the General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance at New York in October, 1873, and called together many belonging to different branches of the Presbyterian family of churches in Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, etc., as well as those in this country. These gave a very cordial approval of a federal union among all Presbyterian churches, and favored the calling of a Pan-Presbyterian convention. A circular letter was sent to thirty-five Presbyterian bodies in Europe and America, inviting them to appoint committees to determine the details of a general convention. The General Assembly appointed twelve Ministers and three Elders as its committee. The result was that a preliminary conference was held in London July 21, 1875, to which the General Assembly sent fourteen delegates. Twenty-two Presbyterian organizations in various parts of the world were represented. It was there decided to form "a permanent Presbyterian Alliance, to meet in general council from time to time in order to confer upon matters of common interest." A constitution was adopted, of which the following is an abstract:

I. NAME.—"The Alliance of the Reformed churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System."

II. MEMBERSHIP.—Churches organized on Presbyterian principles, whose creeds are in harmony with the consensus of the Reformed Confessions, are eligible.

III. THE COUNCIL.—

1. *Meetings.*—A Triennial General Council shall be held.

2. *Constituency.*—The delegates shall, as far as practicable, consist of an equal number of Ministers and Elders from each Church and in proportion to the number of con-

gregations. Presbyterians not delegates may be invited to speak and read papers.

3. *Powers.*—The Alliance shall decide on applications for admission, and consider any subject orderly brought before it. It cannot interfere with the constitution or with the internal or external relations of any Church in the Alliance.

4. *Object.*—To consider questions of general interest to the Presbyterian community; seek the welfare of churches, especially the weak and persecuted; gather information of the Church throughout the world; commend the Presbyterian system; and consider the work of evangelization, the distribution of mission-labor, combination of church energies, the training of Ministers, use of the press, the Sabbath, instruction of children, systematic beneficence, suppression of vices, and the methods of opposing infidelity and Romanism.

5. *Methods.*—By reading papers, delivering and publishing addresses, circulating information of allied churches and their missions, expounding scriptural principles, communicating its minutes to the supreme courts of the allied churches, etc.

6. *Committee on Business.*—Such shall be appointed, through which all communications and subjects shall pass.

IV. Change of Constitution.—No change shall be made except on motion at one meeting, not objected to by a majority of the churches, and carried by a two-thirds vote at the next General Council.

The General Assembly formally determined to enter into this Alliance, and approved of the above constitution, and chose forty delegates, thirty-one corresponding or associate members, to represent it at the first meeting,

which was held in 1877 in Edinburgh,* the second was held in 1880 in Philadelphia, the third in 1884 in Belfast, the fourth in 1888 in London, the fifth in 1892 in Toronto, the sixth in 1896 in Glasgow, and the seventh will be in the city of Washington, D. C., in 1899. The Assembly appointed three Ministers and two Elders as a Permanent Committee on the Presbyterian Alliance for correspondence. "In order to act with efficiency in furthering the interests of Presbyterians scattered over the world, the Council found it necessary to appoint a standing commission with a permanent secretary." Rev. G. S. Matthews, D. D., was appointed General Secretary, and Rev. W. H. Roberts, D. D., American Secretary.* The General Assembly exercised the right to determine the choice of the representatives of this Church in the executive committee of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches. The ratio of representation is two delegates for each one hundred congregations or less up to one thousand congregations; above one thousand congregations, one delegate for each additional one hundred congregations up to two thousand congregations; and above that, one delegate for each additional two hundred and fifty congregations.† The Alliance recommends the organic union and independence of Churches in mission-fields.† A plan of co-operation in mission work in this country was adopted, viz.—1. The authority of the Church courts be recognized as final in the work of the Boards as related to each other. 2. No interference except by voluntary agreement between the denominations. 3. Communicants be urged to unite with some Presbyterian Church where there is no church of their own denomination. 4. Differences to be adjusted by Missionary authorities.†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 306–310. † *Ibid.*, p. 311.

What is schism?

A division or separation in a Church or denomination of Christians occasioned by diversity of opinion; a breach of unity among people of the same religious faith.* Dr. Charles Hodge defines schism to be "either separation without just cause from the true Church, or the refusing to commune with those who are really the children of God." "The doctrine taught by this (1866) Assembly respecting schism is the scriptural doctrine on that subject as it has ever been held in our Church. Schism is separation from the Church without adequate cause. It is a breach of Christian fellowship and subjection, enjoined by Christ on his people. This has ever been regarded as a great sin."† Separation is justified only when required by loyalty to the word of God.

What separations have taken place in the Presbyterian Church?

1. In 1745 the Synod of Philadelphia was divided by the withdrawal of "some brethren of New York," who "erected themselves into a Synod of New York."‡ This separation continued until 1758, when the two were reunited under the name of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.‖

2. In 1766 the Donegal schism, the question at issue being the method of examining a candidate on his religious experience. A reunion was accomplished in 1768.¶

3. In 1797 certain members of the Abington Presbytery of the Synod of the Carolinas withdrew because Rev. Hezekiah Balch was not disciplined for preaching

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 37. † *Church Polity*, pp. 88, 412.
‡ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 181, 233.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 27. ¶ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 620.

certain doctrinal errors. They formed an independent Presbytery, and were called "Independent Brethren."*

4. In 1804 the New-Light Party. Several Ministers of the Synod of Kentucky formally seceded and formed themselves into a Presbytery, renouncing the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church, because they could not retain the Confession of Faith as the standard of doctrine and discipline, declaring themselves "freed from all creeds but the Bible." Some of these afterward joined the Shakers, some the Campbellites; others in 1811 returned to our Church, while others retain their separation under the name of "Christians."†

5. In 1807 the Cumberland Presbytery was formed out of the western part of the Presbytery of Transylvania, and soon began to license and ordain men contrary to the "Form of Government," and without requiring adoption of the Confession of Faith. They refused to obey citations of Synod or the advice of General Assembly, and were suspended. They formed the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination.‡

6. In 1838 the separation between the Old and New School Assemblies. The necessity of the separation was long recognized by both parties. In 1837 a committee was appointed to propose a plan for an amicable division of the Church into two independent denominations. This was not found to be practicable. When the General Assembly met in 1838 at Philadelphia, while completing the organization, the New School party withdrew in a body to the First Presbyterian Church and organized as a General Assembly, claiming to be the true successor of the Assembly of 1837. The Old School party remained in

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 71. † *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 634–640.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 640–646.

the Seventh Presbyterian Church and proceeded with its business, making a similar claim. The question was referred to the civil courts, which decided that the latter was the true successor of the Assembly of 1837, and had right to its title and to the funds belonging to the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The origin of the trouble dated as far back as 1801, in the Plan of Union formed with the General Association of Connecticut.* This gradually introduced and fostered much that was inconsistent with the principles of Presbyterianism. The chief causes which led to the separation were—

(1) Diversities of doctrinal beliefs.

(2) Practical modifications of the "Form of Government."

(3) The dissolution of "elective-affinity" courts.†

(4) Application and methods of discipline.

(5) Changes in forms of worship.

(6) The abrogation of the Plan of Union and the disowning of the Synods and Presbyteries formed under it.

(7) The influence exerted over our missionaries and our church courts by organizations for church work independent of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, even of the General Assembly.

(8) Manner of educating Candidates.‡

The separate existence of the two bodies continued until 1869, when the reunion took place.§

7. In 1857 six synods in the Southern States connected with the N. S. Assembly withdrew, because of the adop-

* See p. 277. † See p. 182.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 656–801; *New Digest*, pp. 453–557.

§ See p. 280.

tion of a paper on slavery. They formed "The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church." In 1859 two other Synods in the Southern States followed them, and the Synod of Missouri assumed an independent position.*

8. In 1861 ten Synods, with the Presbyteries and churches under their care, within the Southern States, withdrew, and in December, 1861, organized a separate Church under another General Assembly. Its title now is "The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States." The reasons given were—state of the country, and especially deliverances of the General Assembly on slavery, rebellion and political questions.† In 1868 the General Assembly recognized the Southern Presbyterian Church as a distinct and separate ecclesiastical organization.‡ There have been several propositions for a reunion, but in 1877 the Assembly resolved that, while we are sincerely desirous to be reunited, it is not expedient to take at present any further action, but we are ready to send and receive delegates whenever the Southern Church is willing to enter into fraternal relations on such terms.§ Telegraphic salutations were interchanged from 1877. In 1882 the Southern Assembly sent the following communication:

"In answer to overtures from Presbyteries the following paper was adopted almost unanimously (three nays):

"'In order to remove all difficulties in the way of that full and formal fraternal correspondence which, on our part, we are prepared to accept, we adopt the following minute, to wit: "That, while receding from no principle, we do hereby declare our regret for and with-

* See p. 494. *New Digest*, pp. 565–568.

† *Minutes G. A. 1866*, pp. 83–90.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 312. § *Ibid.*, pp. 313–316.

drawal of all expressions of our Assembly which may be regarded as reflecting upon or offensive to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America."

"'*Resolved*, That a copy of this paper be sent by telegraph to the General Assembly now in session at Springfield, Illinois, for their prayerful consideration, and, *mutatis mutandis*, for their reciprocal concurrence, as affording a basis for the exchange of delegates forthwith.'"

Our Assembly telegraphed in reply its action in the same words, *mutatis mutandis*, prefacing it with this resolution: "That in the action now to be taken we disclaim any reference to the action of preceding Assemblies concerning loyalty and rebellion, but we refer only to the action concerning schism, heresy and blasphemy."

The Southern Assembly replied, "If the action of the Assembly, telegraphed by your Moderator to our Moderator, does not modify the concurrent resolution adopted by your Assembly and ours, we are prepared to send delegates forthwith."

The Moderator was instructed to answer: "The action referred to does not modify, but it explains, the concurrent resolution, and the explanation is on the face of the action. There is nothing behind it nor between the lines. The dissolution of our Assembly is at hand. We may be ready for final adjournment this evening. Exchange of delegates is impossible before Tuesday. Shall we not each appoint delegates this day to visit the respective Assemblies next year? We await your answer with deep and prayerful interest."

The Southern Assembly unanimously resolved—

"1. That this Assembly does hereby declare its entire satisfaction with the full and explicit terms in which the General Assembly in the United States of America has expressed its reciprocal concurrence in the paper transmitted to our Assembly on fraternal correspondence.

"2. That we do unfeignedly rejoice and render thanksgiving to God in an event suited to take away the reproach of alienation between bodies holding the same standards of faith and order, and tending to bring peace to our borders.

"3. That inasmuch as it is impracticable at this late day to have an interchange of delegates, the Assembly does hereby appoint Rev. William Brown, D. D., Rev. Thomas A. Hoyt, D. D., Hon. B. M. Estes, principals, and —— alternates, to bear to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America our cordial Christian salutations."*

Rev. Samuel J. Niccolls, D. D., Rev. Thomas S. Hastings, D. D., Rev. Herrick Johnson, D. D., Rev. S. Irenæus Prime, D. D., Rev. Edward P. Humphrey, D. D., and Hon. William Strong and Hon. Samuel M. Moore, with alternates, were appointed delegates.†

In 1882, the Assembly recommended "that the utmost care be exercised" by the Board of Home Missions "to avoid all conflict or attrition with the churches of our sister body in the Southern States, and that the work there be conducted in the spirit of the Christian union toward which we believe we are moving. We express our readiness also to co-operate with our Southern brethren on any fields and in any way that may help the progress of the cause so dear to us both." ‡

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, pp. 50, 66, 83, 102, 103.
† *Ibid.*, *1883*, pp. 576, 596. ‡ *Ibid. 1882*, p. 38.

In 1883 the following resolution was adopted:

"Whereas, Fraternal relations between the two great branches of the Presbyterian Church in the United States have been happily established, and for the purpose *now* of securing, as far as may be possible, the cordial co-operation of these two great Christian bodies in all works and measures in which they have a common interest for building up the Redeemer's kingdom; therefore be it

"*Resolved*, That a committee of seven be appointed by this General Assembly to confer with a similar committee, if it shall be appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, now in session in Lexington, Kentucky, in regard to any plans or methods of co-operation in any part of the great work that the Master has laid upon his servants, and which it might appear would be more effectively accomplished by cordial and friendly co-operation than by separate and independent action; and that these committees report the result of their deliberations to their respective Assemblies of 1884." *

This committee reported, recommending (1) "an equal joint use and occupancy of the (Danville) Seminary by the two branches of the Church (Northern and Southern) by the appointment of an equal number of directors and trustees from each branch, and giving to the Southern branch at least an equal number of professors." (2) The raising of additional funds; "each body shall have absolute control of funds raised by itself, using only the income of such funds for the support of the seminary." Not "a tenancy at will," but "a permanent joint-tenancy as to the occupancy," was intended, and the removal of the

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 591.

seminary to Louisville was conceded.* This plan was not accepted by the Southern Assembly. The seminary was recognized in 1886 under our Assembly.† The following concurrent resolutions were adopted by our Assembly: "This Assembly, while asserting its right to labor in every part of our common country, would most earnestly enjoin those charged with the direction of Home Mission work that they see that nothing be done through strife or vainglory; that in prosecuting this work the interests of the other Assembly already in occupancy, either with an organized church or missionary labor, shall be most carefully respected; and that the matter of consolidating feeble churches and in cases of disagreement, threatening the disturbance of fraternal relations, shall be referred to a joint committee of the Presbyteries having jurisdiction. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly, as a matter of comity between our own Church and the Southern Presbyterian Church, growing out of our fraternal relations so recently established, enjoins upon our Church Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods that they have due regard for the discipline of all the Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods of that Church (and *mutatis mutandis*)." The part of the committee representing the Northern Church, "after considering the many difficulties in the way of co-operation, deemed it proper to say to the joint committee that we feel constrained to report to our Assembly that, in our judgment, the only effectual method of removing these difficulties is through organic union between these branches of the Presbyterian Church." The other part of the committee, referring to the action of their Assembly, replied, "we feel constrained to say, that we are estopped

* *Minutes G. A. 1884*, p. 68. † *Ibid.*, *1885*, p. 671; *1886*, p. 153.

from making any recommendations and from considering the matter of organic union." *

Delegates were interchanged in 1884, but the Southern Assembly determined to correspond hereafter by letter; a committee of correspondence was appointed to report to the next Assembly.† In 1885 the fraternal letter from our Assembly again expresses a preference for correspondence by delegates, and reciprocates the sympathy and desire of the Southern Church to co-operate in all matters of church work.‡ In 1887, to remove possible misunderstanding, the Assembly made a further declaration of principles concerning the spirituality of the Church, which the Southern Church approved. This led to the appointment of committees of conference for organic union or co-operation. The Southern Assembly limited the conference to co-operation, a basis for which in Foreign, Home and Freedmen Missions and Publication was adopted by both Assemblies.§ In 1894 the Assembly heard with great joy that overtures had been received by both Assemblies in regard to organic union. But the Southern Assembly deemed it unwise, and ours expressed regret at the decision.‖

9. In 1867, Declaration and Testimony Men. In 1865 the Assembly took action as to the method of receiving persons from Southern churches. A few Ministers and Elders in the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri signed and published a "Declaration and Testimony," which was afterward adopted by the Presbytery of Louisville. This the Assembly declared to be a slander, schismatical and rebellious against the authority of the General As-

* *Minutes G. A. 1884*, pp. 67–70. † *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 101, 113.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1885*, pp. 588, 600, 705–707.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 318–322. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

sembly, and called upon the signers to reconsider their action and withdraw all language deemed by the Assembly offensive or disrespectful. Some did so; the rest formed Presbyteries and the "Independent Synod of Missouri," which in 1874 united with the Southern Church. In the same year some Ministers, in behalf of themselves and several congregations, sent an overture to the General Assembly for reunion. This was favorably answered, and prayer and thanksgiving were offered. They returned as individuals a few years later.*

What is a pastoral or circular letter?

A letter ordered and adopted by the General Assembly and sent to the churches. These have been sent in the peculiar emergencies of the Church to explain the action of the Assembly; to warn against errors of doctrine, prevalent vices and sins, or irregularities in government or discipline; to counsel or to excite to greater spirituality and zeal.†

VI. What are constitutional rules?

Prior to 1805 these were called "Standing Rules." They are "articles of the constitution which, when once established, are unalterable by the General Assembly."‡

How are they made?

"*Before any overtures or enactments proposed by the Assembly to be established as rules regulative of the constitutional powers of Presbyteries and Synods shall be obligatory upon the church, it shall be necessary to transmit them to all the Presbyteries, and to receive the return of at least a majority of them in writing, approving thereof, and such rules when approved shall be appended to the Constitution of the Church.*" This was enacted in 1892, and substi-

* *Minutes G. A. 1866*, p. 61; *1867*, p. 337; *1874*, pp. 27–30; *1877*, p. 872. † *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 294, 824. ‡ See p. 297.

tuted for the previous wording of this section.* If all the Presbyteries do not respond, the question may be deferred until the next Assembly; their answers may be reversed by the Presbyteries before the final count.†

Is the Assembly bound to adopt a constitutional rule which has been approved by a majority of the Presbyteries?

The Assembly having approved of the rule before it was sent to the Presbyteries, it is expected that the next Assembly will ratify it if approved by the Presbyteries. Yet it can decide against it, as in 1827 the Presbyteries approved an overture sent down to them, with exception of one article, which the Assembly regarded as essential, and rejected the whole.‡ The Assembly cannot change the phraseology of an overture after it has been sent to the Presbyteries.§

Can changes be made in the constitution?

The Synod of New York and Philadelphia, preparatory to the formation of the General Assembly in 1788, ordered a thorough revision of the standards—the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, Book of Discipline and Directory for Worship—and adopted them as amended to be the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and determined that they be unalterable unless two-thirds of the Presbyteries shall propose amendments, and these shall be afterward enacted by the General Assembly. The Confession of Faith was amended only in regard to the power of civil government over the Church. The Larger and Shorter Catechisms were approved with only a slight amendment in the former.‖ There have been revisions

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 330.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, *1886*, p. 329. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 38. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 6.

of the Form of Government, Discipline and Directory in 1804 and in 1821. In 1804 the Assembly declared, "The Creed of the Church, if once rightly settled, can never be altered with propriety by any change of time or external circumstances of the Church." In 1844 a committee of the O. S. Assembly suggested that there should be some orderly way of amending our formulas of doctrine, and that the old law is still in force—viz. alterations of the doctrinal standards require a two-thirds vote of the Presbyteries, and constitutional rules a majority.* In 1878 a committee was appointed to consider if any changes or additions should be made to the Form of Government or Book of Discipline. It reported in 1880 a proposed Revised Book of Discipline, which was sent to every Pastor and Session. In 1881 it presented a "second revision," which was recommitted with instructions, and the committee was relieved from revising the Form of Government. The next year the report of the committee was printed and sent to the Presbyteries and to every Minister and Session for consideration.† Their suggestions were sent to the next Assembly.

In 1883 the report was carefully examined, and, "as amended and harmonized, was then unanimously adopted, and the Revised Book of Discipline, with the revision of chapter x. of the Directory for Worship, was ordered to be sent down to the Presbyteries by the Stated Clerk for their consideration as an overture." And it was "*Resolved*, That the proposed revision of the Book of Discipline and of chapter x. of the Directory for Worship be overtured to the Presbyteries for their adoption as a part of the constitution of the Church in

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 51, 328. See page 20.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 13.

place of the existing Book of Discipline and the existing chapter x. of the Directory for Worship; and that the Presbyteries be directed to vote *aye* or *nay* upon the proposed substitution as a whole; with the *proviso*, that any Presbytery, voting in the affirmative, may have the privilege of excepting from the revision any section or sections from which it may dissent, and may by overture recommend a further revision of the same; and that the Stated Clerks of Presbyteries be required to transmit the results of their action to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly on or before the first day of the meeting of the next Assembly." * This revision was adopted in 1885.*

In 1887 a committee was appointed to report on the mode of effecting changes in the Constitution. In 1890 it reported the following new chapter of the Form of Government, which was approved and enacted in 1891:

CHAPTER XXIII.—Of Amendments.

Section 1. Amendments or alterations of the Form of Government, Book of Discipline and Directory for Worship may be proposed by the General Assembly to the Presbyteries, but shall not be obligatory on the Church unless a majority of all the Presbyteries approve thereof in writing.

Section 2. Amendments or alterations of the Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, may be proposed to the Presbyteries by the General Assembly, but shall not be obligatory on the Church unless they shall be approved in writing by two-thirds of all the Presbyteries, and agreed to and enacted by the General Assembly next ensuing; and the written votes of the Presbyteries shall be returned to that Assembly.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 13, 14.

Section 3. Before any amendments or alterations of the Confession of Faith, or the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, proposed by the General Assembly, shall be transmitted to the Presbyteries, the General Assembly shall appoint, to consider the subject, a committee of Ministers and Ruling Elders, in number not less than fifteen, of whom not more than two shall be from any one Synod, and the committee shall report its recommendations to the General Assembly next ensuing for action.

Section 4. No alterations of the provisions contained in this chapter for amending or altering the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, or of this fourth section, shall be made unless an overture from the General Assembly submitting the proposed alterations shall be transmitted to all the Presbyteries, and be approved in writing by two-thirds of their number, and be agreed to and enacted by the General Assembly.

Section 5. It shall be obligatory on the General Assembly to transmit to the Presbyteries, for approval or disapproval, any overture respecting amendments or alterations provided for in this chapter, which shall be submitted to the same General Assembly by one-third of all the Presbyteries. In such cases the overture shall be formulated and transmitted by the General Assembly receiving the same to the Presbyteries for their action, subject as to all subsequent proceedings to the provisions of the foregoing sections.

Section. 6. Whenever it shall appear to the General Assembly that any proposed amendments or alterations of the Form of Government, Book of Discipline or Directory for Worship shall receive a majority vote of all the Presbyteries, the General Assembly shall declare such

amendments or alterations to have been adopted, and the same shall immediately go into effect.

Section 7. Nothing in this chapter shall be so construed as to affect the right of two-thirds of the Presbyteries to propose amendments or alterations of the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, or of the General Assembly to agree to and enact the same.*

How must the replies of Presbyteries be attested?

They must be signed by the Moderator and Stated Clerk. Presbyteries in foreign lands shall send their answers as soon as possible.

How are the answers of the Presbyteries counted?

The Stated Clerk shall present the written answers to the Assembly; these shall be referred to a "Committee of Canvass." On its report that the overture has been approved by a majority of the Presbyteries, the Assembly shall declare it adopted as part of the Constitution; but amendments to the doctrinal parts require the approval of two-thirds of the Presbyteries.†

VII. How often shall the Assembly meet?

"*At least once in every year.*" Several overtures have asked for triennial Assemblies. In 1898 the Assembly declared that annual meetings were required by the representative character of our Polity, the proper supervision of missions and benevolence, the unity, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence of our churches, and the proper hearing of appeals and complaints.‡ See page 528.

Can it hold an adjourned meeting?

In 1846 the opinion of Chancellor Kent of New York was obtained, who says: "I consider the power to be necessarily incident to every deliberative assembly, unless

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 601. † *Ibid.*, p. 602.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 131.

specially prohibited by its charter." "The constitution of the Presbyterian Church leaves silently the same power of adjournment, precisely on the same footing of discretion." In 1869 both Assemblies met in May in New York, and they adjourned to meet in the city of Pittsburg in November of the same year, one in the First Church, and the other in the Third Presbyterian Church.*

Of whom must such a meeting be composed?

The commissioners who were enrolled as members of the Assembly, and they only, can sit as members of the adjourned meeting, except a vacancy occurs by death, resignation, refusal to attend; then the Presbytery may fill such vacancy. So the N. S. Assembly notified its Presbyteries in 1869, when informing them of the adjourned meetings to be held by both Assemblies at Pittsburg to consummate the reunion. At the adjourned meeting of the O. S. Assembly it was determined that all alternates with regular commissions may be enrolled, the principals being absent. The other Assembly was duly informed, and no objection seems to have been made.†

Can the Assembly hold a "pro re nata" meeting?

In the N. S. Assembly, when meeting once in three years, the Moderator, with the concurrence of the Stated and Permanent Clerks, could call a *pro re nata* meeting in any emergency, with four months' notice. After ten years' trial this plan was abolished.‡ The Assembly adjourns *sine die*, the Moderator dissolving the Assembly, and requiring another General Assembly to be chosen and to meet at such a time and place. He has no fur-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 331, 332. † *Ibid.*, p. 333.
‡ *New Digest*, pp. 596–602.

ther power. Even in the next Assembly, unless chosen again as a commissioner, he can only preach and preside until organization is effected; he has no vote.*

When does the Assembly meet?

"*On the day appointed for that purpose.*" The first General Assembly met on the third Thursday of May, at 11 A. M. Usage has fixed that day and hour as the time of the annual meeting.†

Who shall open the Assembly?

"*The Moderator of the last Assembly, if present, or, in case of his absence, some other Minister, shall open the meeting with a sermon, and preside until a new Moderator be chosen.*" The N. S. Assembly decided in 1861 that he need not be a commissioner. But in the reunited church the Rules for Judicatories require that the Moderator be a commissioner.

Who shall open the Assembly if the Moderator be absent?

In 1835, Rev. S. Miller, D. D. (a previous Moderator), preached the sermon. The Stated Clerk called the Assembly to order, and moved that the last Moderator present, being a commissioner, preside; but the Assembly decided that it was not necessary that he be a commissioner, and chose Rev. W. A. McDowell, D. D., to preside during the organization; he was a previous Moderator, but not a member of that Assembly. In 1843 the O. S. Assembly decided that he must be a commissioner of the Assembly. The second rule for judicatories adopted in 1871 requires that "if the Moderator be absent, the last Moderator present, or if there be none, the senior member present shall be requested to take his place without delay until

* *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sects. vii. and viii.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 265. See p. 531.

a new election." In 1880 this was changed by inserting the words "being a commissioner" after the words "the last Moderator present."*

How shall the Assembly be opened?

After the sermon the Moderator shall open the session with prayer. The committee of arrangements appointed the previous year generally makes a partial report, and a recess is taken, after which the Standing Committee (the Stated and Permanent Clerks) report on the commissions. Irregular commissions are referred to a special committee, the roll is completed and nominations for Moderator are called for. Any ministerial commissioner may nominate. The candidates shall vote and withdraw. The vote is taken *vivâ voce*, and a majority of all the votes elects the Moderator. A committee is appointed to bring him to the chair. The former Moderator shall then say, "Sir, it is my duty to inform you and announce to this house that you are duly elected to the office of Moderator of this General Assembly. For your direction in office, and for the direction of this Assembly in all your deliberations, I place in your hands this book, containing the rules for judicatories adopted by the Assembly, which I doubt not will be carefully observed by both in conducting the business that may come before you. And, praying that Almighty God may direct and bless all the deliberations of this Assembly for the glory of his name and for the edification and comfort of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, I resign my place and office as Moderator." The newly-installed Moderator generally makes a short reply as he takes the chair, and the Assembly is ready for business.†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 265, 584.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 260, 261. See p. 529.

May a Moderator serve more than once?

There is no rule prohibiting a re-election, but usage seems to forbid it, as no case of re-election has yet occurred.*

May the Moderator have a double vote?

"When a vote is taken by ballot in any judicatory, the Moderator shall vote with the other members, but he shall not vote in any other case unless the judicatory be equally divided; when, if he does not choose to vote, the question shall be lost." This casting vote, however, cannot be given if he has already given a (ballot) vote.†

May he at any time leave the chair?

In a judicial case, if the Moderator is a member of the court appealed from or a party in the case, he cannot retain his seat. The last Moderator present, or one chosen by the Assembly, shall take the chair. In 1866, in the O. S. Assembly, the former Moderator, Rev. J. C. Lowrie, D. D., seems to have been present, but by vote Rev J. M. Krebs, D. D. (Moderator in 1845), was called to the chair.‡ Or the vice-Moderator may take his place.§

When may a commissioner deliberate and vote?

Not "*until his name shall have been enrolled by the Clerk, and his commission examined and filed among the papers of the Assembly.*"

VIII. How shall each session of the Assembly be opened and closed?

"*Each session of the Assembly shall be opened and closed with prayer. And the whole business of the Assembly being finished, and the vote taken for dissolving the present Assembly, the Moderator shall say from the chair, 'By virtue*

* *Minutes G. A. 1898*, pp. 312–314. † *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 262–266. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 262. § See p. 531.

of the authority delegated to me by the Church, let this General Assembly be dissolved; and I do hereby dissolve it, and require another General Assembly, chosen in the same manner, to meet at ——— on the —— day of ——, A. D. ——.' After which he shall pray and return thanks, and pronounce on those present the apostolic benediction." In addition to the prayer and benediction an appropriate psalm or hymn shall be sung.* In 1879 the Moderator in dissolving the Assembly added the words to the above formula, "in the First Presbyterian Church of Madison, Wis." The Assembly met the next year in the State Capitol. The record shows that in the vote appointing the place of meeting no building was mentioned. The following action was taken: That "the Assembly, and not the Moderator, has the right and the power of fixing the place of meeting. The Assembly fixed the city of Madison, and left the present Assembly to seek its own place or house in which to meet. This Assembly selected this hall, after it was so kindly and generously tendered by His Excellency the governor of this State."† The Moderator and the Stated and Permanent Clerks are a committee to report from year to year on the place of meeting of the next Assembly.‡

The Stated Clerk prepared a manual for the use of the Assembly, containing the Rules for Judicatories, the Standing Orders and Rules, Directions to Committees, and other items.§

* *General Rules for Judicatories*, xliii. See p. 538.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 333.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF ELECTING AND ORDAINING RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS.

I. Should there be definite rules for the election and ordination of church officers, binding on all the churches?

The Church is one. The officers of a particular church have duties to the whole Church, the most important of which are performed in the several judicatories. In these they ought to meet and act with each other as "representatives of the people," elected and ordained in the same way. The presence of unordained committee-men in our church courts under the Plan of Union was a great evil and unconstitutional.* "*Having defined the officers of the Church, and the judicatories by which it shall be governed, it is proper here to describe the mode in which ecclesiastical rulers should be ordained to their respective offices, as well as some of the principles by which they shall be regulated in the discharge of their several duties.*"

II. How are officers to be elected?

"*Every congregation shall elect persons to the office of Ruling Elder and to the office of Deacon, or either of them, in the mode most approved and in use in that congregation.*" The ecclesiastical principles must be the same—the mode of carrying out these may differ in the several churches. The Elders and Deacons must be elected by the people, but whether this shall be done directly or indirectly is determined by the usage in each church. In 1827, recognizing the right of every church in this matter, the Assembly said that "they are inclined to believe that the spirit of our constitution would be most fully sustained

* See p. 279.

by having in all cases a direct vote of the congregation in the appointment of Elders." The mode most approved and in use may be changed by a vote of the congregation.* "The term 'congregation' includes only the actual communicants of the particular church."†

Who determines the time of an election?

The congregation may petition the Session to call a meeting for that purpose. If it be refused, a complaint may be made to Presbytery, who may order the Session to call the meeting. The Session may suggest the number to be elected, and nominate the persons, but cannot interfere with the freedom of the election.‡ The officers of the Session are *ex-officio* the officers of the Congregational meeting.

Does irregularity invalidate the election?

If the meeting be called without the action of the Session or a higher court, it is irregular. In 1856 the O. S. Assembly decided, in the case before it, that the irregularity was not sufficient to invalidate the election, yet recommended that the Elders and Deacons thus elected cease to act until the Presbytery deems the church reasonably harmonious in receiving them in their official capacity. In 1835 the Assembly declared that the election of Elders for a term of years is irregular, but this cannot invalidate the ordination of those thus elected.§ In 1798 certain persons were selected by the Pastor and ordained as Elders without an election by the people. The Assembly declared that they were not Elders, and must be regarded as private members only. See page 317.

Who may vote for Elders and Deacons?

In 1822 the Assembly declared that it was desirable

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 529. See p. 56.

† *Ibid.*, p. 879.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 526.

that communicants only should have the right to vote, yet as custom in some churches has extended the right to members who are not communicants, such election should not be considered void. The Elder is a representative of the people, to exercise spiritual rule in the church; an unbaptized person, not belonging to the visible kingdom of Christ (though a pewholder), can have no right to decide who shall be officers and exercise discipline in the church. "Only Communicants in good standing are qualified voters at the election of Ruling Elders and Deacons." Neither the presiding officers of Church or Congregational meetings, nor the Sessions of Churches possess the power to deprive communicant members of their rights at such meetings, except by due process according to the Book of Discipline.* Communicants under discipline, being suspended from the privileges of church members, are of course debarred from voting for officers. Members whose names have been placed on the reserved list, appearing, cannot claim a right to vote until the Session shall summon them and inquire concerning their deportment during their absence, and shall restore their names to the roll of members. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1865.† This rule applies also to those who have for two years absented themselves from the services of their own church, yet against whom the Session has not deemed it expedient to proceed in discipline. In 1859 and 1897 it was declared that minors, if communicants, have a right to vote, as "it is not in accordance with the principles and usages of the Presbyterian Church to distinguish between members of the church as to the ages in voting." In 1882 the Assembly decided that only actual communicants can vote.*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 531. † *Ibid.*, p. 880. See p. 152.

Who may be elected as Ruling Elders and Deacons?

"*In all cases the persons elected must be male members in full communion in the church in which they are to exercise their office.*" They should of course possess the qualifications set forth in Scripture, "They must faithfully accept the 'Confession of Faith.'"* If an Elder be re-baptized by immersion, he should cease to be an active Elder, and the Session should take action.† Ministers cannot serve. They have their own functions, and are members of Presbytery.‡ "On foreign missionary ground it may be expedient for a Minister to perform temporarily the function of a Ruling Elder without having been specially set apart to the office."§

III. May a person duly elected decline the office?

The call to an office in the Church is really from God, who makes known his will through his word, providence and Spirit. The person elected to an office ought not to accept or decline it because of personal preference, but should consider prayerfully, (1) that God gives the qualifications and duties of the office described in the word of God; (2) that he guides his people in their choice of officers; and (3) that his providential dealings reveal his will concerning each one (Matt. 10 : 5–42; Acts 20 : 28; 1 Tim. 5 : 17; Rom. 12 : 6; Acts 6 : 1–6). The Southern Church says: "Ordinary vocation to office in the Church is the calling of God by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God's people and the concurring judgment of the lawful court of Christ's house, according to his word."‖ When one has been elected to an office he should have

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 532. † *Ibid.*, p. 108.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 527. § *Ibid.*, p. 529.
‖ *Book of Church Order*, ch. vi., sect. i.

time for consideration, and when he "*shall have declared his willingness to accept thereof, he shall be set apart in the following manner.*"

IV. What is ordination?

It is the solemn setting apart of one by prayer and the laying on of hands to an office in the Christian Church (Acts 6 : 6; 13 : 2, 3; 1 Tim. 4 : 14). The imposition of hands "is in accordance with apostolic example, and in the opinion of the Assembly it is proper and lawful;" yet each church may adopt the other method of ordination, simply by prayer.*

What is the difference between ordination and installation?

Ordination inducts into the office, making him a Ruling Elder or Deacon; installation gives him authority to exercise his office over a particular church. Ordination is not to be repeated when a Ruling Elder or Deacon removes to another church, and is called to exercise his office there, but he must be installed in that church.*

Are ordination and installation necessary?

A person, though elected, is not an Elder, has no seat in Session or other church courts, until he be ordained. Nor has he any official relation to the particular church until he be installed. If after installation he remove or in any way terminate the exercise of his office, re-election and installation are necessary.† In 1868 the N. S. Assembly determined that if an Elder return an unused certificate of dismissal, giving satisfactory reasons to the Session for not using it, he may be restored to the membership of the church, and that he is thereby reinstated as an acting Elder of the particular church.*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 534. See pp. 57, 203.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 534. See pp. 313, 321.

What is the form of the ordination service?

(1) "*After sermon, the Minister shall state in a concise manner the warrant and nature of the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained and the duties to be fulfilled by the officer elect.*" (2) In the presence of the congregation the candidate shall make his ordination vows in answer to the constitutional questions,* and the church shall express their readiness to receive and submit to him in the Lord.* (3) He shall then be ordained. (4) He and the congregation shall receive charges from the Minister. And (5) the right hand of fellowship shall be given to him by the members of the existing Session in the presence of the congregation.†

Who is to perform this service?

The Pastor of the church. If the church is being organized, the chairman of the committee of Presbytery shall ordain the officers.‡

In regard to the act of ordination there is a difference of opinion. Some hold that the ordaining power belongs alone to the Minister, and therefore the Pastor only should lay on hands. Others, while denying to Elders any part in the ordination of Ministers, hold that they should take part with the Pastor in the laying on of hands in the ordination of Elders and Deacons.

In this section nothing is said about laying on of hands, but simply that "*the Minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer to the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon, as the case may be).*" Some have therefore concluded that the laying on of hands should be performed only in the ordination of Ministers, where it is

* See pp. 311, 312. † See p. 313. ‡ See p. 32.

required.* In 1851 the O. S. Assembly was overtured "to determine whether, in the ordination of Elders and Deacons, it is unconstitutional or otherwise improper to use the rite of laying on of hands by the existing Eldership." And it was resolved, "That the Session of the ——— church be referred to the minutes of the Assembly of 1842 for an answer to said overture." This decision was, "that it is left to the discretion of each church Session to determine the mode of ordination in this respect"--by the imposition of hands or simply by prayer. Before the division of the Church, the Assembly in 1833 declared that "the imposition of hands, however, we are aware, in many of our churches is practiced; and as it is plainly in accordance with apostolic example, it is the opinion of the Assembly that it is proper and lawful. We conceive that every church in this respect may with propriety be left to adopt either of these two modes as they think suitable and best."†

Is it necessary that Elders or Deacons should adopt the standards of the Church?

The constitutional questions require it. A communicant is received on profession of faith in the redemption of Christ; no other term of communion can be demanded.‡ When he becomes an officer, to exercise rule and discipline, and in the different courts to decide on questions of doctrine, he must receive, adopt and approve of the standards of the Church.§

What vows must the Elder or Deacon make at ordination?

They are contained in the constitutional questions which the Minister "*shall propose to the candidate in presence of the congregation*"—viz.:

* *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xiv. See p. 383.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 534. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 532. § See p. 308.

1. "*Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?*"

2. "*Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?*"

3. "*Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in these United States?*"

4. "*Do you accept the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon, as the case may be) in this congregation, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof?*"

5. "*Do you promise to study the peace, unity and purity of the Church?*"

What is the form of installation?

The fourth and fifth of the above questions, having reference to the exercise of the office in the particular church, are a part of the installation service. "*The Elder or Deacon elect having answered these questions in the affirmative, the Minister shall address to the members of the church the following question, viz.:*"

"*Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a Ruling Elder (or Deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the word of God and the constitution of this Church, entitles him?*"

"*The members of the church having answered this question in the affirmative by holding up their right hands, the Minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer to the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon), etc.*" If, however, he has been ordained, "the Minister shall," on receiving the reply of the members of the church, "declare him to be an Elder (or a Deacon) of that church."

"*He shall give to him and to the congregation an exhortation suited to the occasion.*"

V. What is the meaning of the giving the right hand of fellowship?

"*When there is an existing Session, it is proper that the members of that body, at the close of the service and in the face of the congregation, take the newly-ordained Elder by the hand, saying in words to this purpose: 'We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this office with us.'*" It is a solemn public recognition of the newly-ordained officers by those already in office—a welcoming them to their responsibilities and labors as fellow-laborers in Christ's Church, and a pledge of sympathy and of co-operation (Gal. 2 : 9).

Are ordination and installation necessary before an elected Elder can take his seat in the Session or take part in judicial acts?

So the N. S. Assembly decided in 1868. A judicial decision rendered by a Session of unordained men would not be valid, lawful or binding on the accused. In 1849 the O. S. Assembly declared that when an Elder in any way terminated his relation to the Session by whom he was ordained, he requires installation before he can regularly exercise again the office in the same church or in any other.* This was reaffirmed by the Assembly in 1878 and 1880.† This is true also in regard to term-Elders continuing or resuming the exercise of their office after the term for which they were at first elected has expired.‡

VI. Are these offices perpetual?

"*The offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon are both perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure.*" "But

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 534. † *Ibid.*, p. 541.

‡ See p. 321.

while the office is perpetual, the time of its exercise in each individual congregation may be left to the decision of the church itself."*

How may a Ruling Elder or Deacon cease to act?

1. By removal from the church in which he was installed.†

2. By deposition after trial.‡

3. "*An Elder or Deacon may become by age or infirmity incapable of performing the duties of his office.*"

4. "*Or he may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable in his official character to a majority of the congregation to which he belongs.*"

5. If an Elder cannot acquiesce in the decisions of the superior courts, he should resign.§

6. By the recommendation or order of the superior courts.‖

7. By the expiration of his term of service.¶

If dismissed, when does his official relations terminate?

"The dismissal of a Ruling Elder by letter from a church terminates his official relation to that church." So the N. S. Assembly determined in 1867, and the next year added, "that if he returned his certificate of dismissal unused, with reasons satisfactory to the Session, his reception again by the Session reinstates him in office."** The new "Book of Discipline" says the return of the certificate does not restore him to office.††

Does suspension from the communion involve suspension from office?

An Elder must be "in full communion." If, there-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 536.
† *Ibid.*, p. 540. See p. 59.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 664.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 537.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 538.
¶ See p. 317.
** *Ibid.*, p. 540.
†† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 109.

fore, he lose his standing as a member, he ceases to be an Elder. Restoration to church privileges does not restore him to office. "He cannot be restored to the functions of his office without a special and express action of the Session for that purpose, with the acquiescence of the church." But an Elder may be suspended from office and not from the communion. He may be unfaithful as an officer, yet be not chargeable with anything against his character as a communicant. So there may be reasons for continuing his suspension from office after he be restored to church privileges.*

May an Elder without charge sit in a church court?

In 1835 the Assembly declared that an Elder without charge could not sit as a member of a church court.* In 1875 an eighth section was added to this chapter of the "Form of Government," permitting the election of Elders for a term of service, and provision is made for those Elders whose term has expired "to represent that particular church in the higher judicatories when appointed by the Session or the Presbytery." †

Who is to judge of the incapacity of an officer to serve?

He may be conscious of it, or the Pastor or Session may inform him of the fact: they are his proper advisers.

VII. What action shall the Session take?

"*Whenever a Ruling Elder or Deacon from either of these causes, or from any other not inferring crime, shall be incapable of serving the church to edification, the Session shall take order on the subject, and state the fact, together with the reason of it, on their records. Provided always that nothing of this kind be done without the concurrence of the individual in question, unless by the advice*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 536. See pp. 59, 227. † See p. 321.

of Presbytery." If he consent, the Session may relieve him of his active duties. He remains an Elder, but is without charge. If he refuse to concur, the record goes before Presbytery for review, and that body may give advice that he cease to be an acting Elder, or the Session may bring the matter before the Presbytery by reference or by petition. If the reasons of his incapacity infer crime, he should be regularly tried and disciplined.

How may his unacceptability be ascertained?

The Session, according to this section, is the proper body to inform the officer when this unacceptability is manifest and increasing. A passing dissatisfaction, because of some official action or arising from peculiar circumstances, is not here contemplated, and should not be a reason for his retirement; but reference is made to a permanent unacceptability, which cannot be removed, and which will interfere with his usefulness. It would evidently be improper and destructive of the unity and peace of the church for meetings to be called or petitions to be circulated to test the acceptability of officers. In 1863 the O. S. Assembly sustained a complaint "that the Synod had by a committee visited the ——— church to see if any member of the Session was unacceptable to the people." And in 1867 it was asked, "Has a church Session the right to submit to their church members the acceptableness or non-acceptableness of the acting board of Ruling Elders, or any portion of the board, and to ask the church to settle the question by a vote of the members?" The answer given was: "In case of unacceptableness on the part of any member of a church Session, and the matter cannot be amicably arranged by consent of parties, the proper method of redress is by memorializing the Presbytery to give such directions as

in its judgment the necessities of the case may require under the provisions of the 'Form of Government.'"*

May the Presbytery, without the request of the Session, require the retirement of an officer?

In 1869 the O. S. Assembly referred to "Form of Government," ch. x., sect. viii., and replied that Presbytery has power to visit its churches, inquire into their state, redress evils, and "to order whatever pertains to their spiritual welfare, without being requested by the Session."* Of course the Session or the Elder has the right to complain to the Synod of any improper exercise of this power.

May the Presbytery order the restoration of an Elder who has resigned?

He has consented to the act of Session, and has ceased to be an acting Elder. This is not a judicial action of the Session, and the Presbytery is not competent to reverse it. It has been done according to the order given in this section. The Elder can be restored only by a new election by the church.*

If an Elder refuse to act and leave the church, is he to be regarded as an Elder of that church?

The Session should take action, declaring the facts, or tabling charges against him for disorderly conduct.†

VIII. May Ruling Elders be elected for a term of years?

"*If any particular church, by a vote of members in full communion, shall prefer to elect Ruling Elders or Deacons for a limited time in the exercise of their functions, this may be done.*" The office is perpetual. But a distinction is made between the office and the exercise of its functions—between an acting Elder and one who is

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 538. † See p. 152.

for the time not exercising his office, as in the case of an Elder removing out of the bounds of the congregation which elected him. This section was added in 1875. The constitution evidently required an Elder to continue in the discharge of his duties until removal or age disqualified him. In 1849 the N. S. Assembly decided that they are not prepared to recommend a change in the constitution which would authorize Elders to be elected for a term of years, "believing that the evils of [such] a change would far outweigh those of the present system." In 1857 the O. S. Assembly resolved that it was not expedient to send down to the Presbyteries the proposed alterations of the constitution, making the office temporary. In 1869, in a judicial case, it condemned the action of a church adopting the plan of electing Elders for a term of years.* After the reunion, in a judicial case in 1872, this question was involved, and by the final vote—145 to 173—a complaint (against the election of Elders for a term of service) was not sustained. The minute adopted was: "The case seemed to present in a judicial form the question of the interpretation of our constitution concerning the election of Elders and Deacons, and yet many of the Assembly do not regard it as really involving that question. Hence, in defining its own action the Assembly is not to be understood as deciding that in any case the actual service of the Eldership should be either permanent or limited; but, while the office is perpetual, the time of its exercise in each individual congregation may be left to the decision of the church itself, according to the mode approved and in use in such church." The next year many overtures were presented, and were referred to a committee of seven to

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 343.

report to the Assembly of 1874, which sent down an overture to the Presbyteries. This was declared in 1875 to be adopted by the vote of 101 in the affirmative, 36 in the negative and 3 divided. Thus the eighth section of this chapter was added.* It is left to each church to determine whether to adopt this plan (which is called that of the "Rotary Eldership" or "Term Eldership"), or the old plan, which has always been recognized and practiced in the Church, and which is called the "Permanent Eldership."†

For how long a term may Elders be elected?

"*Provided the full term be not less than three years, and the Session or Board of Deacons‡ be made to consist of three classes, one of which only shall be elected every year.*" When a church shall determine to elect Ruling Elders for a limited time, "they shall be elected and set apart to their office; Elders in office by virtue of an earlier appointment cease to be acting Elders in that particular church."* They are eligible for re-election. At the first election the three classes must be formed, but this section does not determine how this is to be done. There are three methods which would be in conformity with church usage: (1) The congregation may determine the number of Elders to be elected, and proceed to elect, some for one year, some for two, and others for three years. Thus the Board of Publication was reorganized in 1870.§ (2) The congregation may elect the whole number, whose names shall be arranged alphabetically and divided into three classes, who shall serve one, two and three years. Thus the organization of the Board of

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 541.

† See p. 322.

‡ See p. 69.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 364.

Foreign Missions was effected in 1837.* (3) The congregation may elect the whole number, and leave them to determine how the division into classes is to be effected. After the first election there must be an annual election of Elders, who shall serve for three years. Judging from the practice of the Assembly in regard to its Boards, it would not be improper at these annual elections to choose Elders to serve through the unexpired term of those who for any reason have ceased to be acting Elders. The Session cannot be divided into more or less than three classes. The classes must be as nearly equal in number as possible, and the election must take place annually. There is nothing to forbid the re-election of those whose term has just expired. "The provisions of this section cannot be carried out should the Elders be elected for a longer or shorter term than three years." † In 1885 the Assembly declined to "authorize each church to fix such a term of office for its Elders as may suit itself." ‡

"When from necessity there can be but one Elder for the time being, he may be elected for three years, as provided in chapter xiii., section viii., and re-elected at the end of that term; and the division into classes as provided in that section should take place as the Session can be increased in number." § "A constitutional rule must have power to effect whatever is necessary for its perfect operation." If in introducing the Term service it is found necessary to elect one or more classes for less than three years, so as ultimately to make the classes three and the term of service three years, it is lawful to do so in accordance with the principle stated above.§

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 430. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 543.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 605. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 542.

How are the Elders to be regarded who are not re-elected?

The "*Elders, once ordained, shall not be divested of the office when they are not re-elected.*" They are still Elders; their advice may be obtained by the Session, although they can have no vote there. They cannot appear as counsel of an accused person before the Session, for such counsel must belong to the judicatory before which he appears.* "*But [they] shall be entitled to represent that particular church in the higher judicatories when appointed by the Session or the Presbytery.*" This has been interpreted by the Assembly of 1876 "that the Elders referred to, by due appointment of the Session or Presbytery, may become members of any of the courts of the Church above the Session."†

Must re-elected Elders be reinstalled?

The Assembly in 1878 decided that they must be reinstalled before they can resume their seats in Session.‡ In 1880 the Assembly was asked, "Is the reinstallation of Elders, re-elected on the expiration of their term of service, essential to the continued exercise of their office in that church, so that unless reinstalled they cease to be members of the Session?" In reply reference was made to the action in 1878, "with the expression of this Assembly, that when any persons or Sessions are informed of the judgment and will of the highest court of the Church in exposition of matters of government or law, a refusal or neglect to obey and regard the law and judgment so expressed would seem to be a clear indication that such parties should not sit or act in a Session." This action "is not intended to be retroactive, or in any way to affect the validity of the action of Sessions in

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 26.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 543.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 542.

which Elders, regularly elected, but not reinstalled, may have set as members."* In 1881 the Assembly was asked to allow congregations to reinstall re-elected Ruling Elders or not, according to their usage and discretion. The following reply was made: "While it is not essential to the validity of his office that a Ruling Elder, re-elected in a church where the limited-term service prevails, be reinstalled, it is nevertheless more orderly that the fact of his re-election be recognized by his reinstallation, or in some way equivalent thereto."† The next year the Assembly was asked the meaning of this act, and replied: "It was the evident intention of the last Assembly to recommend the reinstallation of Elders, when re-elected; and, to make its intention more definite, the Assembly hereby strikes out of the previous action the phrase 'or in some way equivalent thereto.'"†

May a church having adopted the term Eldership return to the plan of the permanent Eldership?

It may, by a vote of the members in full communion. Yet such changes ought not to be made without due consideration and with a view of establishing a permanent custom in the Church.‡ This is implied also in this section.

May Deacons be elected for a term of years?

The "Form of Government" gave no authority for the election of Deacons for a limited term of service until 1886, when this section was amended, making provision for Term Deacons.* They must be of three classes, each of which shall be elected annually to serve for three years. The regulations which were adopted

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 541.
† *Ibid.*, p. 542.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 529.

for the Term Elders are applicable also to the Term Deacons.*

CHAPTER XIV.

OF LICENSING CANDIDATES OR PROBATIONERS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

I. Who are Candidates?

They are male communicants applying for admission into the ministry, and who are in course of preparation for it. They receive the title as soon as they make formal application and are taken under care of Presbytery. They are called Probationers, because they are under trial, "*that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed.*" "*The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously had of them who are to be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak and unworthy men.*" They continue Candidates or Probationers until they be ordained as Ministers or be regarded by the Presbytery as uncalled to the sacred office. None should be received as Candidates unless they be convinced that they have been called of God to the ministry, and satisfy the Presbytery as to "the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office."†

Who are Probationers?

The O. S. Assembly made a distinction between Candidates and Probationers, regarding students under care

* See pp. 69, 317. † See p. 201.

of Presbytery in their preparatory course as Probationers, and as Candidates after they enter upon their theological studies.* But our "Form of Government" uses the term *Candidates* to include all who, under the care of Presbytery, are preparing for the ministry, and *Probationers* to describe those who are licensed to preach.†

What is a call to the ministry?

"The Protestant doctrine, as we understand it, on this subject is this: First, that the call of the ministry is by the Holy Ghost. . . . The Holy Ghost confers the gifts for the ministry; and by thus conferring them, and exciting the desire to exercise them for the glory of God and the service of Christ, thereby manifests his will that those thus favored should consecrate themselves to the preaching of the gospel. This is the true divine call to the ministry. Second, the evidence of this call to him who receives it, is the consciousness of the inward gift and drawing of the Spirit, confirmed by those external workings of Providence which indicate the will of God as to his vocation. The evidence to the Church is everything which tends to prove that the Candidate has the qualifications for the office of the ministry, and that he is led to seek it from motives due to the operation of the Holy Ghost. Third, ordination is the solemn expression of the judgment of the Church, by those appointed to deliver such judgment, that the Candidate is truly called of God to take part in this ministry, thereby authenticating to the people the divine call. This authentication or ordination is, under all ordinary circumstances, the necessary condition for the exercise of the ministry in the Church."‡ The Assembly has frequently urged parents to consecrate

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 403. † See chs. xiv. and xv.

‡ *Church Polity*, p. 348.

their infant sons to the ministry, as was Samuel (1 Sam. 1 : 11), praying that God would call them to this high office, and instructing them as to the honor of being thus chosen of God and the Church's need for more Ministers. Young men should seek the advice of their Pastors and Elders.* An important report on the increase of the ministry was adopted in 1891. See p. 567.

May a woman be a Candidate?

In 1872 the Assembly reiterated the deliverance of the Assembly of 1832: "Meetings of pious women by themselves for conversation and prayer, whenever they can conveniently be held, we entirely approve. But let not the inspired prohibitions of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, as found in his Epistles to the Corinthians and to Timothy, be violated. To teach and exhort or lead in prayer, in public and promiscuous assemblies, is clearly forbidden to women in the holy oracles."† In 1874 the Assembly, in response to an overture, "expresses no opinion as to the scriptural view of woman's right to speak and pray in the social prayer-meeting, but commits the whole subject to the discretion of the Pastors and Elders of the churches."‡ This does not authorize any woman to apply as a Candidate for the ministry. In 1878 the Assembly refused to sustain an appeal against the decision of the Presbytery and Synod condemning a Pastor for introducing into his pulpit a woman, permitting and encouraging her to preach and teach. The Synod held "that the passages of Scripture referred to in the action of the Presbytery (1 Cor. 14 : 33–37 and 1 Tim. 2 : 11–13) do prohibit the fulfilling by women of the offices of public preachers in the reg-

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 184.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 544. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

ular assemblies of the church;" "The Assembly reaffirmed the language of decision of the Synod as expressing their own opinion." This was reaffirmed in 1896.*

How are Candidates to be tested?

"*For this purpose Presbyteries shall license Probationers to preach the gospel, that after a competent trial of their talents, and receiving from the churches a good report, they may in due time ordain them to the sacred office.*" Licensure is therefore a part of their trial for the ministry.

II. To what Presbytery should the Candidate apply?

"*Every Candidate for licensure shall be taken on trial by that Presbytery to which he most naturally belongs, and he shall be considered as most naturally belonging to that Presbytery within the bounds of which he has ordinarily resided.*" Candidates, whether receiving aid or not from the Board of Education, should be required to put themselves under care of Presbytery as soon as possible, that they may receive proper supervision during their entire course.† "*But in case any Candidate should find it more convenient to put himself under the care of a Presbytery at a distance from that to which he most naturally belongs, he may be received by the said Presbytery on his producing testimonials, either from the Presbytery within the bounds of which he has commonly resided, or from any two Ministers of that Presbytery in good standing, of his exemplary piety and other requisite qualifications.*" Candidates should consult their Presbyteries before changing their church or school relations. They should not take their church letters beyond the Presbytery until dismissed to another Presbytery.‡ A candidate on a foreign field where no

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 544. See pp. 74, 81.

† *Ibid.*, p. 546.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 550.

Presbytery exists may by letters from missionaries on the field be received by a home Presbytery, which may by commission afterward examine, license and ordain him.* This section requires that the candidate be under the care of Presbytery through his whole theological course. If he need aid from the Church in his academic or collegiate course, he must be received under the care of Presbytery before he is recommended to the Board of Education.† In 1872 the Assembly decided that no Candidate should be recommended to the Board for aid "until he has been a member of the Church at least one year, and has also passed his classical studies for an academic year, except in extraordinary cases to be determined by the Board."*

III. How is a Candidate to be received under the care of Presbytery?

"The application for his reception ought usually to be made by his Pastor or a member of the Presbyterial Committee on Education."† "*It is proper and requisite that Candidates applying to Presbytery to be licensed to preach the gospel produce satisfactory testimonials of their good moral character, and of their being regular members of some particular church.*" This is usually done by the Pastor, or in his absence by the applicants presenting a certificate from the Session, testifying to their standing in the church, and the recommendation of them as giving good promise of usefulness in the ministry. It is not uncommon for the Presbytery to appoint a committee to converse in private with the applicants and to report concerning the impression made upon them of their fitness. "*It is the duty of the Presbytery, for their satisfaction in regard to the real piety of such Candidates, to examine*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 549. † *Ibid.*, p. 357.

them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion, and the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office. This examination should be close and particular, and in most cases may best be conducted in the presence of the Presbytery only." If this be satisfactory, they are received under care of Presbytery.* The O. S. Assembly made a distinction between those who were in their preparatory course and those who had entered upon their theological training, preferring "that young men within their bounds who are looking forward to the work of the ministry should be officially recognized as Candidates under the care of Presbyteries only when they are prepared to enter their theological studies, and that until that time they be regarded simply as students on probation, under the general watch and patronage of the Presbytery."† But the "Form of Government" does not make this distinction between Candidates and Probationers.‡ Nor does the reunited Church.

Must the Candidate be a communicant in the Presbyterian Church?

If he be a member of some other Church, he must be regularly dismissed to and received by a Presbyterian church before he can be taken under the care of Presbytery as a Candidate. The Assembly defined the phrase "some particular church" to mean "some particular Presbyterian church."§

What supervision should the Presbytery take of the studies of the Candidate?

The O. S. Assembly in 1860 enjoined "upon every Presbytery which has not so done, to appoint a com-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 552.
† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 403. ‡ See p. 323.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 358.

mittee, whose duty it shall be to make careful inquiry as to the conduct and progress in study of all the Candidates under its care, and to make report to their Presbytery at every stated meeting, or oftener if presbyterial action is needed."* The Candidate is under the direction of the Presbytery in regard to his studies. The Presbytery may at any time arrest his progress if it be discovered that he is unfit to proceed in trial for the sacred office.† In reference to the supervision of Candidates, "it is important to remember that theological seminaries are intended to educate students, and not to determine their qualifications for the sacred office. The duties and responsibilities of Presbyteries are not to be transferred to educational institutions;" "that the rules of the Board of Education in reference to the supervision of Candidates under its care, by Presbyteries, be carefully followed; and that Presbyteries give much careful attention to the official reports of the theological faculties and of the Secretary of the Board concerning the standing of Candidates under their care, and endeavor to secure a high grade of scholarship and personal piety."‡

What is the Board of Education?

In 1819 the Assembly established a Board of Education, "to assist such Presbyteries and associations in educating pious youth for the gospel ministry, both in their academical and theological course." This was continued "by the O. S. branch of the Church from 1838 to the reunion." "From 1838 to 1854 the N. S. branch co-operated chiefly with the American Education Society or its branches; in 1854 the 'Permanent Committee of Education for the Ministry' was established." At the re-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 550. † *Ibid.*, p. 353. See p. 201.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 357–361.

union the Board of Education was reorganized and incorporated, and an act was obtained "authorizing the transfer of the property of the Permanent Committee on Education to the Board of Education."* An early action of our Church to aid Candidates was in 1751, when the Synod of New York recommended "to all their members, as far as prudence may direct, to make another annual collection for the support of young students whose circumstances render them incapable to maintain themselves at learning, and for other charitable purposes; which contributions shall be at the disposal of such respective Presbyteries where they are made."† In 1879 the Assembly adopted a report which carefully replied to the question, "Cannot an adequate ministry be better provided, without the systematic aid of the Church as a body, than with it?" by stating the necessity and expediency of aiding Candidates, and resolved "that the Board of Education is entitled to the increased confidence and support of all our churches as a wisely and efficiently administered agency for conducting our educational work."‡

How may Candidates receive aid from the Board?

"The Board of Education shall only receive and aid Candidates for the ministry of the gospel upon the recommendation of a Presbytery of the Church; and the Presbytery is responsible for their examination, subsequent care and the designation of the amount of aid to be granted to them, within the limits set by the General Assembly." The responsibility really rests on the Presbytery. "No Candidate shall be received by the Board who has not

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 352.

† *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 246.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1879*, pp. 602–604. See p. 430.

been a member of the Presbyterian Church or some closely-related body for at least one year, who has not been recommended to the Presbytery by the Session of the church of which he is a member, and who is not sufficiently advanced in study to enter college, except in extraordinary cases."* In 1872 the Assembly recommended that the Candidate shall have passed his classical studies for an academic year, in ordinary cases, before he can be helped by the Board.† In 1868 and 1877 Presbyteries were asked to require the study of the "Shorter Catechism."‡ The Presbyteries are constantly enjoined to be very careful in their recommendations as to piety, motives, talents, health, promise of efficiency, habits, need, and success in study. These recommendations must be renewed every year, in connection with others from the Sessions of the churches to which they severally belong. It is also necessary that a report be received from the Professors under whom they study as to their standing and conduct. "If at any time there be discovered in a student such defect in capacity, diligence, and especially in piety, as would render his introduction into the ministry a doubtful measure, it shall be considered the sacred duty of the Presbytery to cease to recommend him, and that of the Board to withdraw its appropriations."§ In 1878 this rule was modified, so as to read that in such a case "it shall be the sacred duty of the Board to communicate without delay the information received to the Education Committee of his Presbytery; and if on careful inquiry on the part of the Presbytery no satisfactory explanation of the defect can be

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 357, 554.

† *Ibid.*, p. 549. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 555. See p. 350.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 360.

obtained, or if no response be received by the Board from the Presbytery or from their Committee on Education, within the current quarter, it shall be the duty of the Board to withdraw their aid altogether."* The Board must consider the recommendations and reports, and may grant the appropriation as it may be able. These appropriations are "not to be regarded as a loan to be refunded by those who comply with these rules and regularly enter the ministry, but as a cheerful contribution to facilitate and expedite their preparation for it." But the appropriation shall be refunded with interest if any "student fail to enter on or continue in the work of the ministry, unless he can make it appear that he is providentially prevented; if he cease to adhere to the standards of the Presbyterian Church; if he change his place of study contrary to the directions of his Presbytery, or continue to prosecute his studies at an institution not approved by it or by the Board; or withdraw his connection from the Church of which this Board is the organ without furnishing a satisfactory reason." "The annual appropriations to Candidates shall not in ordinary circumstances exceed one hundred and fifty dollars to theological or one hundred and twenty dollars to collegiate students, and not more than one hundred dollars to extraordinary cases in the preparatory course."† In 1879 the Assembly resolved, (1) "That the theological seminaries be earnestly requested to continue their diligent attention to the whole subject of appropriations to students; that special care be taken that no one shall receive more than is requisite for his necessary expenses; that the sum appropriated to the several students shall be determined by a separate vote of the faculty on each case, . . . and reported at the end of the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 360, 553. † *Ibid.*, *1886*, p. 362.

term to the Board of Trustees." (2) "That each theological seminary be respectfully requested to report annually to the General Assembly how many students have been aided by scholarship funds, and how many of these have also received aid from the Board, and what is the maximum that has been given to any one student." (3) "That hereafter the appropriations of the Board be styled Scholarships." (The O. S. Assembly allowed this in 1851.*) (4) "That the Board of Education shall determine before each college and seminary year, as far as practicable, the exact amount the Board will pay to each student the ensuing year, and that the first payment be made in the month of October, . . . and all subsequent payments shall be made regularly at such intervals as may be determined by the Board." (5) "That the Presbyteries be enjoined . . . to exercise increased care in recommending students in the first instance to the Board of Education for aid, and also in the renewing of such applications from year to year; also, that they . . . be requested to endeavor, through the Standing Committee of the Presbytery on Education, to assist such students as may desire it, by securing for them proper remunerative missionary or parochial employment during vacations."† In 1880 the Assembly resolved that the Board be instructed "to withhold all support from students who stand below the medium mark in the respective educational institutions, unless special and satisfactory reasons are shown to the Board for an exception;" "that, as the struggle of the college student is as severe as that of the student in the theological seminary, the Assembly approves of an equal pecuniary apportionment to each."‡ In 1893

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 402. † *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 562.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1880*, p. 71.

the discretion of the Board was enlarged in accepting academic students, so that they may be received on similar terms to those in the College and Theological Seminary.* Payments cease at the close of the collegiate year, or when the candidate becomes disqualified, marries, is improvident, or is otherwise supported.† The Board was enjoined to aid those students only who attend the seminaries approved by the Assembly.‡ In 1882 the Board was recommended to invest its permanent funds in scholarships yielding each two hundred dollars, but the next year approved the reasons of the Board for not doing so.§ In 1884 attention was called to the act of 1879, and reiterated the resolutions in regard to Seminaries reporting to the Assembly the amount of aid granted to students from their funds.‖ See pages 332, 571. In 1885 the failure of most of the seminaries to answer the questions respecting the number of students aided by scholarships or by the Board was noticed, and their attention was again called to it. "If there are reasons why such information should be withheld, they ought to be understood, and if sustained, the request of the Assembly should be withdrawn."¶

The Board in 1897 was authorized to add the following to its Rules: "III. Scholarships.—10." "2. It is hereby made the duty of the Board, through its Corresponding Secretary, by correspondence with the Candidates, the Education and the Mission Committees of Presbyteries, Synodical Superintendents, and the Board of Home Missions, and the Mission Committees of Synods, to bring about, to as large degree as possible, the em-

* *Minutes G. A. 1893*, p. 59.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 359.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 547.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 63.
‖ *Ibid., 1884*, p. 59.
¶ *Ibid., 1885*, p. 673.

ploying of the probationers of the Church in missionary labor at the conclusion of their studies. 3. Each Theological Seminary is hereby requested to co-operate in this plan by so ordering the course of instruction, and the general life of the Seminary, as to put increased emphasis, if possible, upon the dignity, privilege, and pre-eminent importance, in this crisis of the world's history, of missionary labor; and to use its influence to incline the young men whom it has under its care, without distinction, to a willingness to consecrate the strength and zeal of their early manhood to a task so appropriate to men in their station, and so rich with promise of large results. 4. The Presbyteries are hereby requested to co-operate by making themselves acquainted through the Board of Education and the authorities of the Theological Seminaries, or otherwise, with the number and qualifications of the candidates who are prepared to offer themselves for missionary service, and, as far as possible, to employ them promptly upon the conclusion of their studies, that thus effective measures may be taken to supply some, at least, of our destitute mission-fields, and to make use, without delay, of the men whom the church is at so much pains to educate."*

In 1897 permission was granted to the Board so to revise the rules as to have all students under the care of the Board subject to the same rule.†

The same Assembly expressed pleasure at the interest taken by several Synods in the religious welfare of Presbyterian students in State Universities and other similar institutions, and referred the matter to the several Synods to take action, with the hope that no plan be adopted

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 361. † *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 33.

to lessen the influence of our denominational institutions.*

The expediency of educating German candidates in separate institutions was recognized by the Assembly of 1885, and special attention was called to those Seminaries provided for them.†

In 1896 the Board was "authorized to make exceptions among Spanish students, granting aid to such as marry during their course, when in the judgment of the Board and the Presbytery's committee on Education it seems wise."‡

As to candidates from foreign fields, it was resolved, "*Whereas*, From the testimony and experience of other churches, as well as from the explicit statements and testimony of missionaries who have been and still are employed upon fields of foreign mission labor, abundant evidence has been supplied to us to show that the training of candidates for the ministry in civil and religious circumstances and conditions wholly different from those of their native land and future field of labor, generally, and to a large extent, unfits them for work in their own lands and among their own countrymen; be it *Resolved*, that the Board will not henceforth give aid to any student from the foreign field unless he has been recommended by our foreign missionaries abroad, or has come to study in this country by a special invitation given from this Board upon the request of other duly recognized Church authorities, or missionaries resident on the fields from which these students come."

What information does the Board require before granting an appropriation?

* *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 134.
† *Ibid., 1885*, p. 672.
‡ *Ibid., 1896*, p. 45.
§ *Ibid., 1885*, p. 667.

"The Presbytery, in examining students with a view to their recommendation for aid, must embrace such points as are indicated by the following questions, to which definite answers, by the direction of the Assembly, will invariably be required by the Board: Give name of candidate in full. Age? Residence? Has Presbytery (or the Education Committee in the interim between the meetings of Presbytery) examined him on the following points, and were his answers satisfactory: —Piety? Motives for seeking the ministry? Talents? Health? Promise of practical efficiency? Is he free from expensive and injurious habits? How long has he been a communicant in a Presbyterian church? Give the name of the church. If in an academy, give name of academy and class. If in College, or ready to enter, give name of College and class. If in Seminary, or ready to enter, give name of Seminary and class. If in a Theological Seminary, has he pursued a full collegiate course? If so, give the name of the College of which he is a graduate. If not a college graduate, has he had the equivalent of a college course? If so, send a detailed statement of his previous studies and career. Has he been recommended to Presbytery by his Church Session? Can he recite the Westminister Shorter Catechism? What is the smallest amount required to meet his really necessary expenses to the end of the fiscal year, viz., April 1st? Has he read a copy of the rules? Does he accept the requirements contained in them?"*

What are the duties of Candidates?

"The young brethren who look to this work are earnestly and affectionately reminded that all intellectual ac-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 357.

quisitions are of little value without the cultivation of piety, and that they are expected and required to pay special attention to the practical duties of religion, such as reading the Scriptures, secret prayer and meditation, occasional acts of special consecration of themselves to Christ and to his service as their Redeemer and as the Lord of all; attendance on regular meetings on the Sabbath and during the week; endeavors to promote the salvation of others; and the exhibition at all times of a pious and consistent example." They should report, soon after the meeting of the Assembly, to the Presbyterial Education Committee of their progress, wants and prospects, and they should carefully observe all the rules of the Board. If a student finds it necessary to relinquish study for a time, he should give notice to the Board.*

Where may Candidates study?

In 1879 the Assembly directed "the Board of Education to require the Candidates hereafter received under their care to pursue their collegiate studies, except in very extraordinary cases, in institutions that sympathize with the doctrinal teachings of our Church."† This subject early engaged the attention of our Church. In 1739 the Synod of Philadelphia took steps to establish a school or seminary of learning, but the effort failed. In 1744 the Synod opened a free school, to be sustained by annual collections in the churches, its special object being to prepare young men for the ministry. In 1752 the Synod of New York ordered collections for the College of New Jersey, and the next year sent a delegation to Scotland for aid, with an address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The chief object of the college is

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 360.
† *Ibid.*, p. 359. See p. 347.

stated to be the promoting of the interest of learning and religion in this infant country, and the increase of a sound educated ministry.* In 1790 the Synod of Virginia recommended the establishment of two general institutions of learning, which afterward developed into Washington College in Virginia, and Jefferson College in Pennsylvania. These schools were also "for the purpose of educating young men for the ministry." Such was the origin of several other colleges.†

The theological training of Candidates must be under the direction of the Presbytery. No one shall be licensed "unless, after his having completed the usual course of academical studies, he shall have studied divinity at least two years under some approved divine or Professor of theology."‡ At first Candidates studied with their Pastor or some other Minister, often living in the Minister's house, and were gradually introduced by him into parish-work. But it was early found that a Professor of theology was much needed. In 1761 an effort was made to secure a competent Professor, and a provisional arrangement was made. In 1809 plans were proposed for the establishment of a theological seminary, which in 1812 resulted in the formation of one at Princeton, N. J., which was accommodated in the college buildings until suitable ones could be erected.§ In 1838 the O. S. Assembly resolved that Presbyteries are enjoined to see that their candidates prosecute their studies only at such theological seminaries or with such divines as are thus approved and recognized by the Presbyterian Church. At the reunion this was reaffirmed.‖ In 1895

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 388–396.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 403–406. See p. 441. ‡ See p. 351.

§ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 426–438; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 430–432.

‖ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 778.

the Presbytery of New York was enjoined not to receive under its care for licensure students studying in theological seminaries, whose teaching has been disallowed by the Assembly. This was reaffirmed in 1896 and 1897 and explained as applying equally to all Presbyteries and as not interfering with the right of Presbyteries to judge of the qualifications of their Candidates. Presbyteries in the exercise of their rights "are subject to the Constitutional powers of the higher judicatories."*

What theological seminaries are approved by the General Assembly?

The seminaries recognized and approved by the General Assembly are—†

1. The Princeton Theological Seminary, founded by the Assembly in 1812.

2. The Auburn Theological Seminary, established by certain Presbyteries in Central and Western New York in 1819.

3. The Western Theological Seminary, at Allegheny, founded by the Assembly in 1825.

4. The Lane Seminary, at Cincinnati, founded 1829 by individuals, members of the Presbyterian Church, but not under any ecclesiastical control. It came under the Assembly's supervision at the Reunion.

5. The Danville Theological Seminary, founded by the O. S. Assembly in 1853. It was offered in 1884 to the Southern Church for joint use and occupancy by the two branches of the Church, but declined. It was reorganized in 1886 under our Assembly. See page 291.

6. The McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill. It was originally "The Indiana Theological Semi-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 546-548. † *Ibid.*, pp. 407-524.

nary," at South Hanover, founded by the Synod of Indiana in 1830. It was removed to New Albany in 1840. It was received under the care of the N. S. Assembly in 1859, removed to Chicago and called the Northwestern Theological Seminary. In 1886 it became the McCormick Theological Seminary.*

7. German Theological School, at Newark, N. J. It was organized by the Presbytery of Newark, but reorganized in 1871 according to the plan proposed by the General Assembly, and taken under its care.

8. German Theological School of the North-west, at Dubuque, Iowa. It was an individual enterprise, with the sympathy and support of the Presbyteries of Dubuque and Dane. These two seminaries were reorganized in 1871, and taken under the care of the General Assembly. In 1892 they received a new endorsement, and any change of the course of study or location was disapproved. They were recommended to seek permanent endowment.†

9. Lincoln University, Theological Department, near Oxford, Pa. It was originally called the Ashmun Institute, and was designed for the education of colored men, and the preparation of some, thus educated, for the ministry. In 1871 the theological department was reorganized and placed under the care of the General Assembly.

10. San Francisco Seminary, organized by the Synod of the Pacific in 1871, and received under the care of the General Assembly in 1872.

11. Blackburn University, at Carlinville, Ill. It was founded by Rev. Gideon Blackburn, D.D., in 1838. In 1857 it was incorporated as Blackburn Theological Seminary. In 1867 it was organized as a university. In 1872 it was received under the care of the General Assembly.‡ For several years it has had no Theological department.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 491. † *Ibid.*, p. 510. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

12. Biddle University, at Charlotte, N. C. In 1867 the Presbytery of Catawba with the gift of Mrs. H. J. Biddle of Philadelphia established the Biddle Memorial Institute, under the Committee on Freedmen, who chose its Professors. In 1875 its theological department was taken under the care of the Assembly. In 1876 it was chartered as Biddle University.*

13. Omaha Theological Seminary, at Omaha, Neb. It was organized with approval of the Assembly in 1891.†

The Union Theological Seminary in New York was founded in 1836 by individuals, and not under any ecclesiastical control. In 1870 it proposed a plan by which it and other seminaries should be under the supervision and approval of the Assembly. This was accepted, but in 1893 it declared the plan illegal and itself independent. It is no longer approved by the Assembly.‡

What control has the Assembly over these seminaries?

Before the reunion several of these seminaries were under the direct control of the General Assembly, some were under Synods or Presbyteries, and others were without ecclesiastical control. In 1870 it was agreed that as far as possible all should stand in the same relation to the Assembly, and receive recognition and approbation from the Assembly.§

The following plan was adopted:

1. "Accepting the offer so generously made by the Theological Seminary in New York—a seminary independent hitherto of all direct ecclesiastical control—to invest the General Assembly with the right of veto in the election of Professors in that institution, the Assem-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 520.
† *Ibid.*, p. 522.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 472.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 410.

bly would invite all those theological seminaries not now under the control of the General Assembly to adopt at their earliest convenience the same rule and method, to the end that throughout the whole Presbyterian Church there may be uniform and complete confidence in those entrusted with the training of our Candidates for the ministry."

2. "The several Boards of Directors of those seminaries which are now under the control of the General Assembly shall be authorized to elect, suspend and displace the Professors of the seminaries under their care, subject in all cases to the veto of the General Assembly, to whom they shall annually make a full report of their proceedings, and to whom their minutes shall be submitted whenever the Assembly shall require them to be produced. These Boards shall further be authorized to fix the salaries of the Professors and to fill their own vacancies, subject in all cases to the veto of the Assembly." The veto must be given by the next Assembly.*

In 1894 a plan for a more direct control by the Assembly over the property and instruction of our seminaries was approved and sent to the seminaries. See page 572.

The Assembly has directed and warned—

"That in view of the activity of the adherents of Independency and Prelacy in the dissemination of their views of the Church and its polity, and in view of the grave constitutional and administrative questions in our Church needing intelligent discussion and settlement, the Assembly advises the seminaries under its care to give more attention to thorough and systematic instruction on the constitution and polity of the Presbyterian Church."†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 413. See p. 281.

† *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 91; *1889*, p. 98.

"That in view of the necessity for combining the most thorough instruction with the best training, we suggest to the seminaries the propriety of co-operating with Presbyteries in having the months of the seminary session assiduously devoted to study, and the months of vacation devoted to Christian work, under the special supervision of Pastors and Presbyteries.

"That in view of the importance of a thorough command of the Bible in the original tongues, we urge that greater stress be laid in our seminaries upon a thorough acquaintance with the Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek, and that a creditable examination in the Greek of the New Testament be required of every graduate of a college as a condition to being received into our theological seminaries." *

"That in view of the crude and dangerous utterances of many of the secular and religious papers, periodicals and books, and of some of the pulpits of the land, resulting from the introduction and prevalence of German mysticism and 'higher criticism,' and of philosophic speculation and so-called scientific evolution; in view of the alarming defection from the faith of the gospel both in this country and abroad, and which seriously threatens our own beloved Church; and in view of the fact that the revealed word of God, the Holy Scripture, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and therefore the only hope of mankind,—your committee recommend that this Assembly, in the name of the Great Head of the Church, solemnly warn all who give instruction in our theological seminaries against inculcating any views or adopting any methods which may tend to unsettle faith in the doctrine of the divine origin and plen-

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 91; *1883*, p. 682.

ary inspiration of the Scriptures held by our Church or in our Presbyterian systems of doctrine, either by ignoring or depreciating the supernatural element in divine revelation, or by exalting human conjecture and speculation above historical and divine facts and truths, or by applying hypotheses of evolution, unverified and incapable of verification, to the word of the living God."*

"The General Assembly feels constrained to express itself clearly and decidedly on the rationalistic treatment of the Holy Scriptures by Protestant teachers in Europe, whose works are introduced into our country, and whose evil influence is felt in our Church. Our Confession of Faith (chapter i., section ii.), after giving the names of the books of the Old and New Testaments, adds, 'all which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.' The denial of the authenticity or truthfulness of the Holy Scriptures is a denial of their inspiration; and any teaching that suggests such denial should be not only carefully avoided, but studiously repelled. The Assembly would not discourage the full use of all light in critical study, nor does it assume that any erroneous teaching is welcomed or offered within the bounds of the Church; but it would warn all Pastors and teachers of the danger to young and inexperienced minds in the free use of crude theories and unproved speculations on the part of religious instructors, and would remind them of the paramount importance of sustaining in positive doctrine the authenticity, integrity, truthfulness and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures against the unsanctified learning by which an unbelieving world, through nominally Christian channels, assaults the Church of God."

"The Assembly would also remind the Presbyteries

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 92.

of their special responsibility as guardians of the faith, and that in view of the apprehensions excited throughout the Church by the rationalistic handling of the word of God, it is incumbent upon them to see to it that the appropriate constitutional action be taken, if at any time it should become manifest that any Minister of our Church was promulgating theories of dangerous tendency or contra-confessional doctrine concerning the Holy Scripture."* In 1891 these deliverances were reaffirmed, and in 1893 the original Scriptures were again declared to be inerrant. The Bible in its various translations when freed from errors of translators, etc., is the very word of God and wholly without error.†

"Our theological seminaries stand related to the defence of the truth as our military schools to the defence of the country. . . . The cause is one that appeals more and more powerfully to those who understand the peculiar dangers that beset the Church in modern times, and who believe that human nature can be sanctified only through the truth of God. Men are wanted of disciplined faculties trained in exegesis, dialectics and powers of effective utterance." ‡

The seminaries should provide for the systematic study of the English Bible throughout the entire course. Students should be trained to Christianize the masses.§

Professors should be chosen not only on account of scholarship, but also experience in the ministry.

What is required for admittance to the seminaries?

The student shall produce evidence that he has good talents, is prudent and discreet, is in full communion, and has had a collegiate course or its equivalent. In 1878

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 45. † *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 57. See p. 382.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 674. § *Ibid.*, *1888*, p. 89.

it was resolved, That in the judgment of this Assembly it is desirable that some knowledge of the Hebrew be required of students entering our Seminaries.* And in 1898 the Assembly suggested that all students be required to pass an examination on the Confession of Faith and Form of Government before receiving their diplomas from the Theological Seminaries.†

May Candidates select a seminary and leave at pleasure?

"Our Presbyteries should in all cases inquire into and advise as to the choice by the Candidate of the institution at which he will pursue his studies, and that no Candidate thus selecting his institution should leave it for another without the consent of his Presbytery."‡ The Presbytery should choose the schools and seminaries in which the candidates shall study.§

What is license?

It is a part of trial, authority given by Presbytery to Probationers to preach the gospel for a limited time, that their gifts may be tested, and that the Presbyteries may make "a competent trial of their talents, and, receiving from the churches a good report, they may in due time ordain them to the sacred office." See pp. 201, 323, 326.

By what Presbytery may a Candidate be licensed?

By the one "to which he naturally belongs" and under which he has studied, unless he be transferred to some other Presbytery; and he should be so transferred if he proposes to labor in the bounds of that Presbytery. It is irregular for a Candidate to go into another denomination or any other than our own Presbyteries to obtain a license and return to labor in our bounds.‖ See page 326.

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 95. † *Ibid., 1898*, p. 129.
‡ *Ibid., 1877*, p. 535. See p. 326. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 552.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 549.

Is a liberal education necessary for licensure?

"*It is recommended that the Candidate shall also be required to produce a diploma of bachelor or master of arts from some college or university, or at least authentic testimonials of his having gone through a regular course of learning.*" The Assembly has always insisted on this, although in certain cases it has waived this qualification, as in 1758 the Synod permitted the reception of a Welsh Licentiate, and in 1807 the Assembly authorized the Presbytery of Philadelphia to license a colored Candidate.* In 1876 the Trustees of Lincoln University overtured the Assembly in regard to the licensure and aid of young colored men seeking the ministry, and received the following answer: "The General Assembly has no authority to modify the regulations of our 'Form of Government' in respect to the qualifications of Licentiates. At the same time the Assembly recognizes the propriety of the exercise by the Presbyteries of a wise discretion in their administration of the functions entrusted to them by the Church, in view of the great work to be done by our Church among the colored people in this country. The Assembly specially accords such discretion to those Presbyteries which are providentially brought into special relations to that work; meanwhile, in view of the experience of several years, enjoining upon such Presbyteries the obligation to take great care lest any incompetent or unworthy men be admitted into the ministry of our Church."*

IV. Why is a thorough education necessary?

"*Because it is highly reproachful to religion, and dangerous to the Church, to entrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men.*"

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 553.

In what studies shall the Candidates be examined?

"*The Presbytery shall try each Candidate—*

1. "*As to his knowledge of the Latin language and the original languages in which the Holy Scriptures were written.*" Often the college diploma is received as evidence of his knowledge of Latin and Greek.

2. "*They shall also examine him on the arts and sciences.*" A college diploma is generally considered sufficient evidence.

3. "*On theology, natural and revealed.*"

4. "*On ecclesiastical history.*"

5. "*On the sacraments and church government.*"

6. "*In the English Bible.*"*

These examinations are generally conducted in open Presbytery by standing committees on examinations, all the members, however, having the privilege of asking questions. The examinations may be arrested at any time by vote. Sometimes the Presbytery, if large, pressed with business and having a large number of Candidates under its charge, orders that the Standing Committee on Examinations shall carefully examine all Candidates, and report in detail the result to Presbytery for final action.

What written pieces are required?

"*And in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate, and practically to enforce, the doctrines of the gospel, the Presbytery shall require of him—*

1. "*A Latin exegesis on some common head in divinity.*"

2. "*A critical exercise, in which the Candidate shall give a specimen of his taste and judgment in sacred criticism, presenting an explication of the original text, stating its*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 555. See p. 566.

connection, illustrating its force and beauties, removing its difficulties, and solving any important questions which it may present."

3. "*A lecture or exposition of several verses of Scripture,*" and—

4. "*A popular sermon.*"

Before these are approved as parts of trial they are generally handed to committees for examination, especially the Latin exegesis and the critical exercise. Sometimes the Presbytery require them all to be read before the body or a congregation.

V. May the Presbytery demand further trials?

"*These or other similar exercises, at the discretion of the Presbytery, shall be exhibited until they shall have obtained satisfaction as to the Candidate's piety, literature and aptness to teach in the churches. The lecture and popular sermon, if the Presbytery think proper, may be delivered in the presence of a congregation.*" Formerly this was generally done, and in many places the custom is continued. But in the larger Presbyteries the Candidate is required to read or deliver before the body the sermon, at least in part, that they may have some idea of his qualifications as a public speaker.

Is a knowledge of the Catechisms necessary?

In 1868 the O. S. Assembly required the Presbyteries "to see that the Candidates for licensure be well versed in the Catechisms and well furnished with Scripture proof-texts."* In 1880 it was "recommended that the directors of the theological seminaries under the care of the Assembly be requested to see to it, that all Candidates for the Presbyterian ministry under their instruction be prepared for an annual examination in the 'Westminster

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 555. See p. 331.

Shorter Catechism.'" This was reiterated the next year.*

How are the examinations and pieces to be approved?

After the various parts of trials are completed to the satisfaction of Presbytery the Candidate retires, and the roll is called to give every member the opportunity to express his opinion. The roll is generally called a second time for the vote, to sustain these parts of trial. The question is then put, Shall the Candidate be licensed to preach the gospel?

VI. When may a Candidate be licensed?

"*That the most effectual measures may be taken to guard against the admission of insufficient men into the sacred office, it is recommended that no Candidate, except in extraordinary cases, be licensed, unless, after his having completed the usual course of academical studies, he shall have studied divinity at least two years under some approved divine or Professor of Theology.*" Attempts have several times been made to increase the required term to three years. In 1792 the Assembly declared that the rule adopted by the Synod of New York and New Jersey, requiring three years, was unconstitutional. In 1792, 1835 and 1836 overtures were sent to the Presbyteries proposing that the change be made in the constitution. In 1836 and 1837 a majority of the Presbyteries which answered voted in favor of the change, but not a majority of the whole number. The Assembly has, however, often declared "that it is highly important that theological students continue the full time of three years in the seminary, and complete the whole course of study prescribed in the plan," and that "it is in general highly inexpedient for Candidates for the ministry to apply for licensure at

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 63; *1881*, p. 577.

such a period of their course of study as would prevent them from finishing the three years' plan of studies." The O. S. Assembly in 1844 declared that a pledge of three years' study does not conflict with the constitution.* In 1863 it recommended that the Presbyteries exercise great prudence in licensing of Candidates, and that in ordinary cases this be postponed until the completion of the theological course.† In 1876 the Assembly replied to an overture from the Lincoln University in regard to colored Candidates, according certain discretion.‡ In 1887 Presbyteries were advised in extraordinary cases, for the evangelization of the masses, to take advantage of the flexibility of the rules for licensing candidates.§ In 1891 the Asssmbly decided that when a full college course was impracticable the student be required to take a seminary course of three years, preceded by at least one year's preparatory training. He should be not less than 25 years of age, with fair education, of approved piety, and with good talents. Full record should be made of each case.‖

How long is the course of study in the seminaries?

They all have adopted a three-year course. In 1865 the O. S. Assembly approved that the plan of the Princeton Seminary should read, "The period of continuance in the Theological Seminary shall in no case be less than four years previous to an examination for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity."¶ But the next year, at the request of the faculty the Assembly "sanctioned the adoption by any or all of our seminaries of a course of studies to be pursued, purely at the option of students, during a fourth year, not impairing the three years' course

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 556.
† *Minutes G. A. 1863*, p. 19.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 553.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1887*, p. 112.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 557.
¶ *Minutes G. A. 1865*, p. 573.

as heretofore pursued, provided no increase of the number of teachers shall be asked on this account. And no distinctive degree or title shall be conferred on those electing to pursue the fourth year's course, save a certificate similar to that now authorized for the three years' course." *

May one be licensed without expecting to be ordained?

"The General Assembly cannot sanction the practice of licensure as a means to attain a higher measure of usefulness merely, without aiming to reach ordination, as this would be virtually to make two grades of preaching officers." †

May a Candidate preach without a license?

It is certainly contrary to the design of this chapter, and dangerous to the churches. Those who teach and preach should be under the supervision of the church courts. The Assembly has often expressed disapproval of those who preach without license. ‡ Yet Candidates are encouraged to try their gifts, under the direction of their Pastors or of the Presbytery, during the seminary vacations, in prayer-meetings and even in church services, and in destitute places as colporteurs. § Sometimes application is made to Presbytery for a temporary license to preach during the second vacation within the bounds of the Presbytery and under the supervision of some Pastor. || Students should not preach without authority from their Presbytery and permission from that within whose bounds they desire to labor. ¶

VII. How is the Candidate to be licensed?

"If the Presbytery be satisfied with his trials, they shall then proceed to license him in the following manner: The

* *Minutes G. A. 1866*, p. 46. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 559.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 543. § See p. 455. || See p. 80. ¶ *Min. G. A. 1892*, p. 111.

Moderator shall propose to him the following questions," in the presence of the Presbytery:

1. *"Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?"*

2. *"Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?"*

3. *"Do you promise to study the peace, unity and purity of the Church?"*

4. *"Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other Presbytery in the bounds of which you may be called?"*

In licensing Local Evangelists the fourth question should be: *"Do you promise to submit yourself in the Lord to the government of this Presbytery during the period of your service in it as a Local Evangelist?"* *

VIII. *"The Candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, and the Moderator having offered up a prayer suitable to the occasion, he shall address himself to the Candidate to the following purpose,"* the members of Presbytery standing: *"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which he hath given to the Church for its edification, we do license you to preach the gospel wherever God in his providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and may the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen."*

In the case of a Local Evangelist, the above should read: *"we do license you to preach the gospel within the bounds of this Presbytery."** See page 565. Should he desire ordination he must pass the regular examinations for licensure and ordination prescribed in the Form of Goverment.†

* *Minutes G. A. 1894*, p. 88. † *Ibid., 1898*, p. 130.

Is it necessary that he assent to the Standards?

It has always been required. See page 379.*

What record shall be made?

"*A record shall be made of the licensure in the following or like form, viz.:*

"*At ———, the — day of ———, the Presbytery of ——— having received testimonials in favor of ——— ———, of his having gone through a regular course of literature, of his good moral character, and of his being in the communion of the Church, proceeded to take the usual parts of trial for his licensure; and he having given satisfaction as to his accomplishments in literature, as to his experimental acquaintance with religion, and as to his proficiency in divinity and other studies, the Presbytery did, and hereby do, express their approbation of all these parts of trial; and he having adopted the Confession of Faith of this Church, and satisfactorily answered the questions appointed to be put to Candidates to be licensed, the Presbytery did, and hereby do, license him, the said ——— ———, to preach the gospel of Christ, as a Probationer for the holy ministry, within the bounds of this Presbytery, or wherever else he shall be orderly called.*"

A copy of this record, signed by the Moderator and Stated Clerk, should be handed to the Licentiate as a certification to the church of his authority to preach.

What powers have Licentiates?

They are licensed to preach the gospel as part of their probation for the ministry. "Although Candidates and Licentiates are in training for the gospel ministry, and in consequence of this are placed under the care of Presbyteries, and in certain respects become immediately responsible to them, yet they are to be regarded as belonging to the order of the laity till they receive ordination to the whole

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 4, 8.

work of the gospel ministry."* They cannot administer the sacraments.† Nor pronounce the benediction.‡ Nor solemnize marriage. Yet the O. S. Assembly in 1844 resolved that they "do not consider them as violating any rules of the Church by solemnizing marriages in those States where the civil laws expressly authorize them to do it."§ They have no seat or voice in Session or any church court, yet, as part of their preparation, they should be present as frequently as possible.‖ If acting as Stated Supplies of churches, they are not to be regarded as Pastors, nor to sit as Moderators in the Session or congregational meetings.¶

IX. May a Candidate be transferred from one Presbytery to another?

"*When any Candidate for licensure shall have occasion while his trials are going on to remove from the bounds of his own Presbytery into those of another, it shall be considered as regular for the latter Presbytery, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, to take up his trials at the point at which they were left, and conduct them to a conclusion in the same manner as if they had been commenced by themselves.*" This implies that he receives a regular dismissal from the Presbytery which began his examinations. It is not lawful for him to place himself under the care of a Presbytery while under the care of another, especially after being refused a license.**

X. How may a Licentiate be transferred?

"*In like manner, when any Candidate after licensure*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 560. See p. 133.
† *Directory for Worship*, chs. viii. and ix. See pp. 83, 90.
‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 108. See p. 117.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 561. See p. 97.
‖ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 86. ¶ See p. 130.
** *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 549. See p. 214.

shall, by the permission of his Presbytery, remove without its limits, an extract of the record of his licensure, accompanied with a presbyterial recommendation, signed by the Clerk, shall be his testimonials to the Presbytery under whose care he shall come."

XI. For how long a time may a Candidate be licensed?

The constitution leaves it indefinite; the Presbytery was therefore at liberty to recall the license at any time when satisfied that the preaching is not to the edification of the churches. The Assembly in 1872 adopted the following rule: Every license shall expire at the end of four years, unless the Licentiate during that period be called to permanent labor in the Church. The Presbytery may extend the license for one year.* In 1874 this was explained to mean that all licenses then in force expired in four years from the date of that action.†

May a license be renewed?

There are cases in which this seems proper, as after restoration to health, return from foreign travel, resuming study after being engaged for a time in teaching or secular employments, or even restoration after church discipline. The Assembly seems to refer to such cases among others in its deliverance, "that the Assembly has no power over the functions of the Presbytery in granting and continuing licenses, save that of review and control."†

May a license be recalled?

"*When a Licentiate shall have been preaching for a considerable time, and his services do not appear edifying to the churches, the Presbytery may, if they think proper, recall his license;*" or whenever it is discovered that the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 559.
† *Ibid.*, p. 560.

Candidate is unfit for the ministry; or when charged with immorality, in which case the Presbytery should not only deprive him of his license, but also remit him to the Session for further discipline; or whenever the Presbytery is dissatisfied with his conduct or preaching.*

Where may a Licentiate preach?

He may preach "within the bounds of this Presbytery, or wherever else he shall be orderly called;" such is the wording of his license. He is under the care of Presbytery, which should therefore see that he is properly employed within their bounds in vacant churches or missionary stations; or, with the approbation of Presbytery, he may labor elsewhere, or enter the service of the Boards.

How are Candidates licensed in other churches?

See pp. 202, 387.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE ELECTION AND ORDINATION OF BISHOPS OR PASTORS, AND EVANGELISTS.

I. What is a vacant church?

Every congregation without a Pastor is to be regarded as a vacant church, though it may have a Stated Supply and be regularly ministered to by the Pastor of another church. "The Presbytery is officially the Pastor of every vacant church within its bounds."†

How is a vacant church to be ministered unto?

The Session of a vacant church, under its responsibility to Presbytery, must take charge of the pulpit and determine who shall preach therein. Permission should be

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 560. † *Ibid.*, p. 588.

asked of Presbytery for leave to supply the pulpit, and the Session should invite those who are sent to them recommended by Presbytery.* The Session should "use their best endeavors to promote the settlement of a Pastor in the speediest manner possible consistently with the peace, order and edification of the congregation; and it is the privilege of the people or any portion of them to complain to the Presbytery when they think that the Session, after being suitably requested, neglect or refuse to convene the congregation to elect a Pastor."† If it be inconvenient or impossible to procure a Minister on any Sabbath, the services should be conducted by the Session according to "Form of Government," ch. xxi.‡

How may a Session procure a Pastor?

There are several methods.

1. The Presbytery or Pastors or other persons may recommend certain Licentiates and Ministers as suitable Candidates. These the Session may invite in turn to preach one or more Sabbaths, until the congregation appear prepared to unite on one for their Pastor. The Licentiates and Ministers thus presented to the church are styled Candidates for the pulpit. This method is called "candidating." It is in very general use, but has many serious objections, placing the Minister in a disadvantageous position, and failing to give the church a fair opportunity to judge of his qualifications, and often destroying the harmony of the congregation.

2. A second may be called "the Stated-Supply plan." The Session may select from those recommended to them, or of whom they have some knowledge, one who in their judgment gives promise of usefulness, and may engage him

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. vi.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 562.

‡ See p. 551.

as a Stated Supply for a few months or a year. This may be done with the expressed intention of settlement as Pastor at the end of the time if agreeable to both parties. This also has objections: Ministers and Licentiates do not like so long a period of uncertainty and trial, and the church cannot receive much edification while it continues.

3. Another plan is "by committee." The Session, dreading the evils of the above plans, may supply the pulpit by inviting settled Pastors, Professors or other Ministers who cannot be regarded as Candidates to preach for them while the church is vacant. A meeting of the congregation is called, and a committee, composed of the Session or a part of it and of certain persons of the congregation, is appointed to select a Pastor. The congregation may indeed veto their choice, but it is generally understood that the decision of the committee shall be accepted by the church. Recommendations are received, and the committee visit different churches and hear the Pastors in their ordinary ministrations, and become acquainted with their work and personal character. When they are satisfied that they have found a Minister who will be acceptable to the congregation, they may converse with him on the subject, and if he be willing to consider their offer, he may desire to visit the church and preach there before giving a final answer. The committee render their report to the congregation, and the call is voted and prepared for the action of Presbytery. Even a Licentiate may be heard by this method: the committee may request some neighboring Pastor to invite him to preach in his pulpit, or they may visit the church to which he has been sent to labor by the Presbytery. This method is often employed by the

more important churches where Ministers of reputation and experience are sought. It is growing in favor, having many decided advantages, affording as it does to Ministers and churches better opportunities of forming correct judgments. A modified form of this plan is sometimes employed. The congregation may have a small or inexperienced Session, and, possessing great confidence in their former Pastor or some other Minister, may appoint him the committee, with like powers as above, to select a Pastor for them. This, however, places great responsibility upon the Minister.

Our book does not prescribe the plan to be pursued, but it assumes that the congregation as such, or by their chosen representatives, shall have ample opportunity to be "satisfied with his ministerial qualifications" and have some experience of his labors before they shall make out a call for a Pastor.* "*When any Probationer shall have preached so much to the satisfaction of any congregation as that the people appear prepared to elect a Pastor, the Session shall take measures to convene them for this purpose.*"

May several Candidates appear before the congregation?

This seems in most cases unavoidable. Some Candidates do not make any marked impression upon the people, and the Session do not deem it advisable to invite them again. Several may therefore be heard more or less favorably before the church is ready to make out a call. The Session should be careful in their selection of Candidates, and should restrict the number as much as possible, to prevent divisions in the church. This section implies that when a Probationer is a Candidate, he should be for some time the prominent, if not the

*See p. 368.

only, Candidate before the meeting is called to elect a Pastor.

Who may call a meeting of the congregation to elect a Pastor?

"*The Session shall take measures to convene them for this purpose.*" They shall call the meeting when "*the people appear prepared to elect a Pastor.*" "*And it shall always be the duty of the Session to convene them when a majority of the persons entitled to vote in the case shall by a petition request that a meeting be called.*" The Session may deem it ill-advised to call the meeting at the time, because of great excitement, undue haste, want of sufficient knowledge of the Candidate, or a conviction that the Candidate is unfit for the position. In such cases the Session may call the meeting, depending upon the reasonableness of the congregation to listen to their advice and adjourn the election. Or they may refuse to call it, confident that the Presbytery will sustain them in such a course when the matter comes before that body by complaint; for the people or any portion of them have the privilege of complaining if "the Session, after being suitably requested, neglect or refuse to convene the congregation." The Presbytery is required "to prevent all undue delay by the Session or the people," and "to prevent all precipitancy in the settlement of any Minister, or the adoption of any system of proceedings in the congregation inconsistent with the real and permanent edification of the people." * The Assembly of 1877 "would deprecate undue haste in the consummation of pastoral ties, as itself prophetic of speedy dissolution." "Relationships designed to be lasting must be carefully considered and prayerfully entered into." †

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 562. † *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 543.

"But in all cases the meeting must be called by the Session or by some higher court."*

II. Who shall Moderate the congregational meeting?

"*The Session shall solicit the presence and counsel of some neighboring Minister to assist them in conducting the election contemplated, unless highly inconvenient on account of distance, in which case they may proceed without such assistance.*" Where the Presbytery has appointed a Minister to be the Moderator of the Session of the vacant church, he should preside over the congregational meeting.† If another Minister is called in ("*some neighboring Minister*"), he must be of the same Presbytery. If no Minister can be procured, the Elder chosen by the Session as a temporary Moderator should preside. And in all cases the Clerk of Session is by virtue of his office Clerk of the meeting.† If any exceptions be taken from the ruling of the Moderator, they must be laid before the Presbytery.‡

III. How shall the congregational meeting be called?

"*On a Lord's day, immediately after public worship, it shall be intimated from the pulpit that all the members of that congregation are requested to meet on ——— ensuing at the church, or usual place for holding public worship, then and there, if it be agreeable to them, to proceed to the election of a Pastor for that congregation.*" There should be ample time given, that all may be informed of the proposed meeting. It is not unusual to give ten days' notice (the time specified in the "Book of Discipline" for citations, etc.); yet frequently the meeting is held the same week. According to Presbyterian principles, the election must be directly by the people; it is their

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 562. † *Ibid.*, p. 526.

‡ *Pardovan Collection*, p. 4.

precious and inalienable privilege to elect their own Pastors.*

How are Pastors chosen in other denominations?

In the Episcopal Church and in the Reformed Episcopal Church the Pastor or Rector is elected by the Vestry, which is composed of members of the congregation chosen annually by the parish to manage its temporal affairs. Notice of the election must be sent to the Bishop, together with the acceptance of the Minister.†

In the Methodist Church the Bishop, assisted by the Presiding Elders, at the Annual Conference makes the annual appointments of the Ministers for all the churches. Informal requests are often received from Ministers and church officers, but the Bishop has full power. He may appoint a Minister over the same church for three years in succession, but not for a longer time. There is a strong desire and effort on the part of many to increase the limit to four, or even five, years, but it meets with decided opposition.‡

In Congregational churches two distinct bodies are recognized—the church, which is composed of the communicants; and the society, or parish, as it is sometimes called, which is a self-perpetuating body corporate, holding the title of the property and managing the temporal affairs of the church. When a Pastor is to be chosen these two bodies hold separate meetings, and must unite on the Candidate before he is regarded as elected. The result of their action is laid before a Council of churches called for that purpose, which proceeds to examine the Candidate, approve the call, and install him.§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 563, 878–880.

† *Digest of the Canons*, 1878, title i., canon 14, sect. i. See p. 388

‡ *Discipline*, 1880, p. 105. See p. 391.

§ *Congregational Manual*, pp. 6, 10, 21, 39, 42. See pp. 37, 389.

In the Lutheran Church the election is by the people.

IV. How should the congregational meeting to elect a Pastor be opened?

"*On the day appointed the Minister invited to preside, if he be present, shall, if it be deemed expedient, preach a sermon.*" If the sermon, for any reason, be omitted, the Moderator generally states the nature and importance of the pastoral office, and gives such other instruction as the congregation may need. Prayer is then offered, asking God's direction and blessing. The minute of the Session calling the meeting is read, and the Moderator "*shall announce to the people that he will immediately proceed to take the votes of the electors of that congregation for a Pastor, if such be their desire; and when this desire shall be expressed by a majority of voices, he shall then proceed to take votes accordingly.*" The desire is generally expressed by resolving "that this congregation do now proceed to elect a Pastor."

Who may vote for a Pastor?

"*No person shall be entitled to vote who refuses to submit to the censures of the church, regularly administered, or who does not contribute his just proportion, according to his own engagements or the rules of that congregation, to all its necessary expenses.*" In 1711 it was agreed "that none shall be allowed to vote for the calling of a Minister but those who shall contribute for the maintenance of him." This section, as adopted by the Synod in 1788, required the electors to be "regular members who punctually pay toward the support of the church." This was omitted in the revision of 1820. In 1863 the O. S. Assembly sustained a complaint against a Synod for limiting the right of voting for a Pastor to communicants, but declared that "the Assembly in this judgment does

not intend to condemn a practice prevalent in some of our congregations in which the right of voting for Pastor is confined to communicants." In 1867 the O. S. Assembly refused to enact a law that none but communicants in good and regular standing shall vote for Pastor.* Each church is therefore left to its own judgment or custom in this matter, save that communicants cannot be deprived of their right to vote, and that other voters must be contributors to the support of the church.† "A church member may not absent himself a longer time (than one year) from the ordinances without a forfeiture of his good standing."‡ In 1879 the Assembly resolved "that it is the judgment of the General Assembly that all members of the church in full communion have the right to vote in the election of Pastor in the congregation with which they are connected, subject to the conditions in section iv., ch. xv., of the "Form of Government."§ In 1897 the Assembly declared that neither officers of a Congregational meeting nor the Session can deprive communicants of good standing of their right to vote except by due process of discipline. And the Sessional roll of communicants and the Trustees' list of contributors are authoritative lists of voters.‖ In some of our churches only the communicants vote; in others, the communicants and the heads of families holding pews; and in others, the communicants and all who are contributors.

In Congregational churches each congregation may adopt its own rules as to electors, but the usage is that in the church meetings only the male adult communi-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 563, 878. † *Ibid.*, p. 564.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 665. § *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 630.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 880.

cants shall vote. In the society there are no minors nor females.*

V. What is the duty of the Moderator after the votes are taken?

The Session as such, or any member of the meeting, may make nominations. The vote thereon is generally taken by ballot, especially if there be more than one Candidate. If the votes are all for the same Candidate, the Moderator shall declare him unanimously elected. If there be a small minority, the Moderator should persuade them to unite with the majority and make the vote unanimous. But "*if it appear that a large minority of the people are averse from the Candidate who has a majority of votes, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the presiding Minister shall endeavor to dissuade the congregation from prosecuting it further. But if the people be nearly or entirely unanimous, or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a Pastor, the presiding Minister in that case, after using his utmost endeavors to persuade the congregation to unanimity, shall proceed to draw a call in due form, and to have it subscribed by the electors, certifying at the same time, in writing, the number and circumstances of those who do not concur in the call.*" The call may be ordered at the meeting, and the papers prepared and subscribed afterward. The meeting should be closed, as all ecclesiastical meetings are, with prayer and the benediction. Generally the Moderator offers such congratulations or advice as he judges the people need under the circumstances.

What is done with the record of the meeting?

It is made by the Clerk of Session as Clerk of the meeting. It should not be entered upon the minute-

* See p. 364.

book of Session, for it is not an act of the Session, and Presbyteries frequently condemn the encumbering of the sessional records with extraneous matter. There should be prepared a separate book in which the Clerk should record the minutes of all meetings of the congregation called by the Session.* *"All which proceedings shall be laid before the Presbytery, together with the call."*

VI. In what form shall the call be made?

"The call shall be in the following or like form, viz.:

"The congregation of ——— being, on sufficient grounds, well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, ——— ———, and having good hopes from our past experience of your labors that your ministrations in the gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation; promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you the sum of ———, in regular quarterly (or half-yearly or yearly) payments, during the time of your being and continuing the regular Pastor of this church. In testimony thereof we have respectively subscribed our names, this — day of ——, A. D. ——.

"Attested by A. B., Moderator of the meeting."

This form is generally followed. The exact words are unimportant, provided the facts and pledges are clearly expressed. The blanks are to be filled according to the direct vote of the congregation. The call becomes a legal obligation. This seems necessary, that *"the Pastor may be free from worldly cares and avocations."* The civil courts have often recognized the bind-

* See p. 165.

ing nature of the contract. Sometimes the payments are made monthly, or even weekly.

Is a definite salary requisite?

The form of the call requires a definite salary to be pledged. The Presbytery in approving the call must consider if it be sufficient, and may refuse to place the call in the hands of the Pastor elect, even when he and the congregation are fully satisfied as to the amount of salary, if the Presbytery deem it insufficient.* When the church depends upon the Board of Home Missions for part of the salary, the congregation can pledge only what the church is able of itself to raise: a clause should be added, however, stating how much aid is expected from the Board. Sometimes the agreement is made that the Pastor shall receive a certain proportion of the yearly or weekly income of the church. But this is contrary to the spirit of this section. It gives the Presbytery no opportunity to judge of the sufficiency of the Pastor's support; he is not secured from anxiety, but is left dependent very much upon the changing state of feeling in the congregation; and no legal, definite pledge is given by the people to provide for him. The Assembly have frequently urged upon churches the duty of making liberal provision for the support of their pastors, as in 1811, and by the N. S. Assembly in 1854. The O. S. Assembly in the same year published a report on the subject, which was ordered to be read by the Pastors from the pulpits.†

Should the congregation provide a parsonage?

The use of one is often mentioned in the call as a part of the salary pledged. As early as 1766 the Synod rec-

* See p. 377. *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 567.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 566; *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 199–203.

ommended that every Minister be provided "with a glebe, with a convenient house and necessary improvements." Very frequently since has the Assembly repeated the recommendation, as in 1872, when it was resolved that churches be recommended to provide suitable parsonages or manses; that Presbyteries have standing committees on manses; and that Ministers and Elders press the matter on the attention of the people.* The next year the Assembly's Committee on Manses, after three years' labor, was discharged, and the work committed to the Board of Church Erection, "with positive instructions that it be efficiently prosecuted." Little or nothing was, however, then done. In 1886 the Board presented a plan for aiding the building of Manses, which was approved. In 1898, the appropriations amounted to $14,150.†

May the salary be afterward increased or diminished?

(1) The call is in the nature of a contract. If any change is made in the terms, it can only be by agreement of parties. The Board of Trustees cannot make any change, for it is not one of the parties. The congregation, called together by the Session, is the one party, and the Pastor is the other. Any change must be by mutual consent. (2) The call differs from an ordinary contract in that the approbation of Presbytery is necessary to give it validity. When fully satisfied, the Presbytery places the call in the hands of the Candidate, and because approving of the terms thereof constitutes the pastoral relation. Any change, therefore, must be sanctioned by the Presbytery. The laws of the different States recognize these principles. The amount of

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 567, 568.

† *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 270. See p. 514.

salary in the call is determined by the present ability of the congregation and the circumstances of the Pastor; that amount is pledged to "*free him from worldly cares and avocations.*" But by the increased prosperity of the church or by larger necessary expenses of the Pastor the congregation is obligated to add to the amount pledged, "*that he may be free from worldly cares.*" This is recognized in the verbal pledge in the service of installation,* in which the people promise "to continue to him, while he is their Pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which they have promised, and whatever else they may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among them."† When by mutual consent the salary has been increased, the contract has been changed, even if the consent of the Pastor has been a silent one, merely receiving the additional sum as a regular payment. The congregation cannot, without his concurrence, diminish the amount to that originally promised. The laws of the State have recognized this. The plan of starving out a Pastor by decreasing his salary is as illegal (civilly and ecclesiastically) as it is irreligious. If the congregation feel unable to continue the salary, and the Pastor be unwilling to have any change made, the matter should be referred to Presbytery.‡

In 1854 the O. S. Assembly "recommended to the Elders, Deacons and Trustees of our churches and congregations to meet together on some day before the first of November next, and yearly thereafter, or oftener if necessary, and institute inquiry whether the Minister or Stated Supply is properly and fully supported; and, if they find that he is not so supported, to take immediate

* See p. 383.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xiii.

‡ See p. 209.

measures to increase his support, and report to their Presbytery at its next meeting."*

How is the salary to be provided for?

Each congregation should adopt a plan for collecting the salary which it deems most advisable. There are several plans now in use:

(1) By subscription. This is often adopted in new, small and feeble churches. Once a year, generally at or after the annual meeting, each person connected with the congregation is expected to subscribe according to his ability, and to pay at certain times during the year. Often this is supplemented by collections taken at each service, and even by other means.

(2) By taxation. In larger and wealthier congregations the pews are owned by and deeded unto the pewholders. They are obtained in return for subscriptions given for the building of the church, or by subsequent purchase. The owners may occupy them, or rent them to other parties, or sell or bequeath them as any other property. The expenses of the congregation are provided for by a tax laid upon the pews according to their assessed value at the annual meeting of the congregation.

(3) By rental. The congregation under this plan retains full possession and control of the pews. Whatever is given toward the building is given freely. The pews are rented by the Trustees, or persons appointed by the congregation for that purpose, for sums varying according to the position and size, and either for a year or for an indefinite period, according to the wish of the parties. If there be an annual rental, persons occupying pews are generally understood as retaining them unless notice is given to the contrary. Often the amount of rental is de-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 567.

termined at the annual meeting, to meet the estimated expenses of the coming year.

(4) By auction. This is sometimes called "the annual sale of pews;" it is really only a rental by auction. The pews are held only for one year. The committee appointed for that purpose determines the price (rental) of each pew according to its size and position. At a public auction those desiring pews contend for them by bidding above the assessment, the highest bidder obtaining the pew.

(5) By weekly offerings. This is often called the "envelope system." The pews are said to be free, although families and persons are encouraged to occupy the same seats Sabbath after Sabbath. Sometimes the pews are assigned to the different families, not according to their supposed value or the amount to be contributed to the support of the church. At the beginning of the church year each person is expected to subscribe a certain amount. He is furnished with envelopes dated for each Sabbath of the year, and he is expected to return one each Lord's Day, with one fifty-second of the amount thus pledged enclosed therein.

(6) By collection. The pews may be free or assigned to families and individuals for the year. The duty of giving freely on each Lord's Day as the Lord hath prospered them is frequently impressed upon the people, and collections are taken at each service for the expenses of the church, every person being expected to contribute according to his ability at the time.*

Should the Presbytery inquire how the congregations are fulfilling their contracts with the Pastors?

This is part of the duty of Presbytery, often urged by

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 840. See pp. 520, 566.

the General Assembly. In 1854 the O. S. Assembly enjoined upon the churches to see that their Ministers were fully and properly supported, and required the Presbyteries to call upon every Minister to answer whether he had preached upon ministerial support. The N. S. Assembly the same year adopted a similar recommendation.* Many Presbyteries, according to a standing rule, demand of the Elder whether his Pastor's salary has been fully and regularly paid during the year.

VII. How may the call be signed?

The members of the congregation may sign it, but it may be subscribed "*by their Elder and Deacons, or by their Trustees, or by a select committee.*" "*But it shall, in such case, be fully certified to the Presbytery by the Minister, or other person who presided, that the persons signing have been appointed for this purpose by a public vote of the congregation, and that the call has been in all other respects prepared as above directed.*" The meeting should also appoint commissioners to appear personally before the Presbytery and prosecute the call.† They should bring the record of the meeting and the call, and be prepared to plead that it be placed in the hands of the Candidate. If the Presbytery be satisfied with the call, they should approve it, and if willing that the Candidate should accept it, they resolve to place it in his hands.

VIII. What does the presentation and acceptance of a call imply?

"*When a call shall be presented to any Minister or Candidate, it shall always be viewed as a sufficient petition from the people for his installment. The acceptance of a call by*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 566.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect x. See p. 376.

a Minister or Candidate shall always be considered as a request on his part to be installed at the same time." This should be done as soon as possible.*

Wherein does ordination differ from installation?

Ordination makes a Probationer a Minister—installation makes a Minister a Pastor. A man may be ordained without being installed, but he cannot be installed without ordination. The dissolution of the pastoral relation does not affect his ministerial character.

May ordination and installation be at different times?

"*When a Candidate shall be ordained in consequence of a call from any congregation, the Presbytery shall at the same time, if practicable, install him Pastor of that congregation.*" Installation "may be performed either by the Presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient."† Ordination is the act of the Presbytery. In the early history of our churches it was difficult for the Presbytery to be assembled at an isolated church; therefore commissions were sometimes appointed to perform this presbyterial act. The right to do so was denied by the Assembly of 1896.‡ When the church calling a Pastor is at a considerable distance from the place of meeting of the Presbytery, or when the Presbytery cannot meet at the time deemed important for the installation service, or when the church cannot entertain the Presbytery, or when it is desirable that the Candidate be at once empowered to administer the sacraments and perform other ministerial acts, the Presbytery may proceed to ordain him when they place the call in his hands, and appoint a committee to install him at such future time as may be deemed convenient. From this

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 568.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xvi., sect. iv. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 192.

whole chapter it is evident that installation be in the presence of the congregation.

IX. To what Presbytery shall the call be presented?

"*The call, thus prepared, shall be presented to the Presbytery under whose care the person called shall be.*" The Candidate is generally informed of the action of the congregation, and is thus prepared to reply when the Presbytery approves the call. "*If the Presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may be accordingly presented.*" This is done by the Moderator in the presence of the Presbytery, who, having placed it in his hands, asks if he be ready to accept it. On his assent the Presbytery generally appoint a committee to arrange for his ordination and installation. "*No Minister or Candidate shall receive a call but through the hands of the Presbytery.*" "To facilitate the business and avoid expense and delay, it has become the common usage for the Candidate to obtain a dismission to the Presbytery within whose bounds is the congregation seeking his services; being received by that Presbytery, the proceedings are as in the case of their own Candidates" or Ministers.*

X. How shall the call be presented if the Candidate belongs to another Presbytery?

"*In that case the commissioners, deputed from the congregation to prosecute the call, shall produce to that judicatory a certificate from their own Presbytery, regularly attested by the Moderator and Clerk, that the call has been laid before them, and is in order.*" This process is generally rendered unnecessary,* as the Licentiate laboring for some time in a congregation, or knowing that a call has been prepared, would obtain a dismissal to that Presbytery and be received before the call is presented. Often,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 569, note.

however, the times of the meeting of the Presbyteries render this impracticable, or the Licentiate may be engaged in some work in the bounds of his own Presbytery which he cannot leave without their judgment and their approval of the call. In such cases the commissioners must take the call, duly attested, to both Presbyteries, either of which may disapprove the call and stop proceedings. The same rule applies to unemployed Ministers, and even to Pastors.* But "*if that Presbytery present the call to their Licentiate, and he be disposed to accept it, they shall then dismiss him from their jurisdiction, and require him to repair to that Presbytery into the bounds of which he is called, and there to submit himself to the usual trials preparatory to ordination.*" The Assembly in 1834 declared that "our 'Form of Government' seems to recognize the right and privilege of each Presbytery to examine and ordain those who come to the pastoral office within their bounds, and who have never before exercised that office;" and therefore "those who propose to pursue the work of their ministry in any section of the country where a Presbytery is already organized" should go as Licentiates, and there receive ordination. This is still more important when the Candidate belongs to another denomination.†

May a Presbytery refuse to put the call into the hands of the Candidate?

This is implied in sect. ix. The power is often exercised by Presbytery.‡ In 1875 the Assembly answered an appeal and complaint of a Minister on the action of a Presbytery refusing to put a call into his hands: "The General Assembly has repeatedly decided that Presbyte-

* See p. 395.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 193.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 569.

ries have discretionary power in such cases, which decisions are clearly in accordance with the 'Form of Government' (see ch. xv., sect. ix.); therefore the appeal and complaint be dismissed."* In 1855 the O. S. Assembly justified a Presbytery in refusing to approve a call because the salary was insufficient, though the church and Minister were fully satisfied.† As early as 1726 it was decided that a congregation is "at liberty to call another Minister in an orderly way as soon as they shall pay up what arrears appear justly due to" their former Pastor.‡

XI. What are the trials for ordination?

"*Trials for ordination, especially in a different Presbytery from that in which the Candidate was licensed, shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experimental religion; as to his knowledge of philosophy, theology, ecclesiastical history, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and such other branches of learning as to the Presbytery may appear requisite; and as to his knowledge of the constitution, the rules and principles of the government and discipline of the Church.*"

Wherein should this examination differ from that for license?

It should be a repetition of that examination, by which his qualifications for preaching the gospel were tested.§ As he is now to be invested with authority as Pastor in the Church, special care therefore should be taken to ascertain his knowledge of the principles and the application of church government and discipline.

What is the constitution?

The Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, Book of Discipline

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 569.
† *Ibid.*, p. 567.
‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 88.
§ See p. 349.

and Directory for Worship. The proof-texts were added by order of the Assembly. There were also notes, which were considered valuable, but had no authority, never having been referred to the Presbyteries; these were discarded in the revision in 1820. The Assembly has frequently reiterated the above definition of the constiution. In 1832 it again declared that "the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly of Divines are included, and do constitute an integral part of the standards of the Church." In 1848 the O. S. Assembly decided that in ordination the question put to the Candidate, "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church?" includes the receiving and adopting the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, "in the same unqualified sense" in which he adopts the other parts of the Confession of Faith. Those who cannot adopt the constitution of the Church cannot be ordained or received as Ministers. In 1825 the Assembly, in answer to an overture respecting those who manifest a decided hostility to creeds, confessions and formularies, determined "that the constitution expressly requires of all Candidates a solemn declaration that they sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture."* At the reunion it was agreed that "the reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, the infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted, as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture, and the Government and Discipline of the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 8.

Presbyterian Church in the United States shall be approved as containing the principles and rules of our polity." *

The Southern Church states: "The constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States consists of its doctrinal symbols, embraced in the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, together with the Book of Church Order, which comprises the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline and the Directory of Worship." †

What written pieces are required?

"*Such written discourse or discourses, founded on the word of God, as to the Presbytery shall seem proper.*" Generally a sermon on an assigned text is read or delivered in whole or in part before the Presbytery, and sometimes before a congregation.

How is the vote taken on these parts of trial?

The Candidate retires, and the roll is called, that each member may express his opinion and vote to sustain or not sustain. If the Presbytery be satisfied, it is resolved that he be ordained to the gospel ministry. The Candidate is recalled, and the result announced to him. A committee is appointed (including one of the Elders from the church) to report arrangements for the ordination and installation. This committee generally reports, recommending the time and the place and the Ministers who shall take part in the service. When the Presbytery adjourns, they do so to meet at the time and place thus determined for the ordination.

Is it proper to appoint the Sabbath as the time for ordination?

The Assembly in 1821 declared that "it is not expe-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 34. See p. 280.

† *Book of Church Order*, ch. vii., sect. i.

dient that ordinations should take place on the Sabbath, yet there may be cases in which urgent and peculiar circumstances may demand them. The Assembly therefore judge it best to leave it to the Presbyteries to act in this concern as they judge that their duty requires." *

Where ought the ordination to take place?

"*If convenient, in that church of which he is to be the Minister.*" † "*It is also recommended that a fast-day be observed in the congregation previous to the day of ordination.*" (See Acts 13 : 2, 3).

XII. What are the services preparatory to ordination?

"*The day appointed for ordination being come, and the Presbytery convened,*" after the usual services "*a member of the Presbytery, previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. The same or another member appointed to preside, shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit, in the audience of the people, the proceedings of this Presbytery preparatory to this transaction; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance, and endeavor to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction.*" The Moderator of Presbytery generally presides. The sermon is often delivered by some Minister invited by Presbytery, not necessarily a member of that body. Neither a committee nor a commission can ordain.‡ See page 375.

What vows are required of the Candidate?

"*Then, addressing himself to the Candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions, viz.:*"

1. "*Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?*"

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 570.

† See p. 206.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 192.

2. "*Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?*"

3. "*Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in these United States?*"

4. "*Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?*"

5. "*Have you been induced, so far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?*"

6. "*Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?*"

7. "*Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a Minister of the gospel, as well as in all relative duties, and in the public duties of your office; endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your conversation, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?*"

8 "*Are you now willing to take charge of the congregation, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call? and do you promise to discharge the duties of a Pastor to them as God shall give you strength?*"

The candidate should stand near the pulpit and make these vows audibly. Should he afterward change his belief as to the inerrancy of the original Scriptures, he should withdraw from our Ministry. This is not a new test, but interprets what has always been the belief of the Church, as taught in the Confession of Faith.*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 45, 57, 73, 668. See p. 346.

XIII. What promises do the people make?

"*The presiding Minister shall propose to the people the following questions*" (they should be standing):

1. "*Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive ——— ———, whom you have called to be your Minister?*"

2. "*Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?*"

3. "*Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?*"

4. "*And do you engage to continue to him, while he is your Pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?*"

XIV. How shall the people answer?

"*By holding up their right hands.*" The assent may be expressed *vivâ voce* if desired, but a formal and solemn ratification of these pledges, which were expressed or implied in the call, is necessary.

How is the act of ordination performed?

"*The Candidate shall kneel down in the most convenient part of the church,*" and the presiding Minister shall come down from the pulpit and stand in front of the Candidate, while the other Ministers of the Presbytery gather round the Candidate. "*The presiding Minister shall, by prayer and with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the gospel ministry.*"

Who may lay on hands?

The Ministers of the Presbytery, corresponding members as well, and often Ministers of other denominations

who may be present; but these, if convenient, should be first invited to sit as corresponding members (this may be done before the public service). Ruling Elders, though members of the Presbytery, and having responsibility of judging of the qualifications of Candidates, should not take part in the act of ordination. In 1842 the O. S. Assembly recommended "an adherence to the order and, until recently, the uniform practice of our Church—viz., to allow Preaching Elders or Bishops only to engage in that service." The next year and in 1844 it asserted that neither "the constitution nor the practice of our Church," nor "the letter or the spirit of the constitution, or the principles and practice of the Presbyterian churches in Europe or America since the Reformation," "authorize Ruling Elders to impose hands in the ordination of Ministers." The N. S. Assemby was equally explicit. These deliverances were re-affirmed in 1890.*

How is the right hand of fellowship given?

"*Prayer being ended, he*" (the newly-ordained Minister) "*shall rise from his knees, and the Minister who presides shall first, and afterward all the members of the Presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this purpose, 'We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this ministry with us.'*" In this part of the service the Ruling Elders do not take part, notwithstanding the expression, "*all the members of the Presbytery.*" "This language manifestly implies that those welcoming him do themselves occupy places in that ministry to which they welcome him."*

Should the ordination and installation be announced?

The presiding Minister "shall solemnly pronounce and declare the said Minister to be regularly constituted the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 150.

Pastor of that congregation."* The Stated Clerk should also publish in one or more of the religious papers that A. B. has been ordained and installed Pastor of —— church.† The Southern Church prescribes that after the right hand of fellowship be given, "the Moderator shall then say: 'I now pronounce and declare that A. B. has been regularly elected, ordained and installed Pastor of this congregation, agreeably to the word of God and according to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and that as such he is entitled to all support, encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'"‡

What charges shall be given?

1. To the Minister, who shall stand conveniently near the pulpit while "*the Minister presiding, or some other appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God, to the newly-ordained Bishop.*" (See 2 Tim. 4:1, 2.) 2. "*And to the people.*" Usually it is given by another Minister appointed for that purpose. These charges are to urge them "*to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties,*" and in ordinary cases should be given by members of the Presbytery.§

How is the service to be closed?

The presiding Minister or some other "*shall then by prayer recommend them both to the grace of God and his holy keeping, and finally, after singing a psalm, shall dismiss the congregation with the usual blessing.*" The benediction is generally pronounced by the newly-ordained Pastor as his first ministerial act. The service just described includes that of installation as well as of ordination, and

* *Form of Government*, ch. xvi., sect. vi. † See p. 399.

‡ *Book of Church Order*, ch. vi., sect. v. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 573.

therefore the last section of the next chapter should be observed: "*It is highly becoming that after the solemnity of installment the heads of families of that congregation who are then present, or at least the Elders and those appointed to take care of the temporal concerns of that church, should come forward to their Pastor, and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.*" This is very generally observed, and does much to strengthen the union just established.* "*And the Presbytery shall duly record the transaction*" and "enroll the name of the new Minister."

What is the standing of the newly-ordained Minister?

By the act of ordination he ceases to be a communicant in a particular church, amenable to Session. He is a member of the Presbytery, and responsible to it. He has "full authority of a Minister of the gospel to preach, to administer the sacraments, to perform the rite of marriage, and to do all other acts and things which properly belong to the sacred office." He has the same standing and authority as all other Ministers.†

XV. May a Candidate be ordained without a call, and without installation over a church?

"*It is sometimes desirable and important that a Candidate who has not received a call to be a Pastor of a particular church should nevertheless be ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, as an Evangelist to preach the gospel, administer the sealing ordinances and organize churches in frontier or destitute settlements.*" They are called Evangelists, or Ministers *sine titulo*. This should not be done if a Presbytery is already organized in the destitute places

* See p. 400.

† *Manual of Law and Usage*, p. 129; *Form of Government*, ch. iv. See pp. 45, 83, 90, 97, 181, 210.

and new-growing parts of our Church, except by that Presbytery. In 1850 the O. S. Assembly declared that it was orderly to ordain Evangelists "to labor in fields having feeble churches, which are not able to support a Pastor and are too remote conveniently to secure the services of an ordained Minister." Foreign and Home Missionaries, Licentiates engaged in teaching or as Editors, etc., may be thus ordained when the Presbytery deem it necessary. Foreign Missionaries are often ordained *sine titulo* at home, even though they are to labor where Presbyteries have been organized. Great caution is urged upon the Presbyteries in this matter, and between 1764 and 1810 it seems to have been more or less the custom to seek the advice of Synod or General Assembly before consenting to ordain as Evangelists. Yet the proposition to make this consent necessary was rejected by the Presbyteries in 1810 and in 1813.*

What change in the questions at ordination must then be made?

"*The last of the preceding questions shall be omitted, and the following used as a substitute, viz.: Are you now willing to undertake the work of an Evangelist, and do you promise to discharge the duties which may be incumbent on you in this character, as God shall give you strength?*"

What is his standing?

The same as that of other Ministers. The office is the same, but he has no special relation to any particular church.†

How are Candidates received into the ministry of the Episcopal Church?

Candidates well recommended must apply to the Bishop

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 574. See p. 33.

† See p. 50.

of the diocese, who shall superintend their studies and employ them as lay readers. They cannot assume the vestments of a clergyman nor pronounce absolution or the benediction. They must be Candidates for three years, after which they are examined, by the Bishop or by two or more Presbyters (Priests) appointed by the Bishop, who are called Examining Chaplains, for ordination as Deacons, the lowest of the three orders in their ministry. The ordination is performed by the Bishop with the laying on of his hands. They are subject to the Bishop, who may license them to preach when he judges them qualified, and may send them to officiate as Deacons under a Priest, the Rector or Pastor of a church. They have special charge of the poor and of the children, assisting the Rector in his public services and pastoral labors. They may baptize and assist in the distributing the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper, but cannot consecrate these elements, nor can they pronounce the absolution or the benediction. They must remain Deacons for one year, and are regarded as Candidates for the Priest's orders (or for the second order of the ministry). As such they must be examined, by the Examining Chaplains or by the Bishop and two Priests, on various subjects; they must read sermons and parts of the service, and present certain certificates testifying to their fitness for the ministry, and that they have been called to labor in some church or parish. The election of a Rector (Pastor) is by the Vestry of the church, and should receive the approval of the Bishop. The Vestry is composed of the Churchwardens and other persons, chosen to take charge of the temporal affairs of the parish, and are not necessarily communicants. The ordination of a Priest is with the laying on of hands by the Bishop and the Priests present.

this may take place at any time or place before his "institution" (or installation) over a parish as its Rector. The service of institution may be performed by a Priest appointed by the Bishop as "the institutor." Priests have all the functions of Ministers, except that of ordination, confirmation and supreme authority, which are invested in Bishops (the third and highest order of the ministry). Bishops are chosen by the Convention of a diocese. A diocese is a certain territory, containing at least six parishes, set apart by the General Convention to be under the jurisdiction of a Bishop. The Convention of a diocese is composed of the Rectors and lay deputies (representing the several churches). These sit together, but vote separately as clergy and laity. The election of a Bishop must receive the approval of the House of Bishops, and of the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, in General Convention, or, if these be not in session, the approbation of a majority of the Bishops and of the Standing Committees of several dioceses. The ordination of a Bishop is by three or more Bishops, with the laying on of their hands. Their peculiar functions are confirmation, ordination and supervision, each having supreme authority within his own diocese, and together, as the House of Bishops, having the general oversight and highest power of the Church.*

How are Candidates received into the ministry of the Congregational Church?

Candidates apply to some Association for license to preach. An Association is composed of Ministers for prayer and mutual counsel and improvement. It exercises no ecclesiastical function, except that of licensing

* *Digest of Canons*, 1878, title i., canons 1–15; *Book of Common Prayer.*

Candidates. This is done after a careful examination according to the custom of that Association. Application for ordination must be made to a Council composed of Ministers and delegates of churches, called by a congregation choosing a Pastor or approving of a Licentiate's desire to be ordained *sine titulo*. When a Candidate has preached to the satisfaction of a congregation, the communicants, as the church, hold a meeting and vote to call him as their Pastor. The society, which is a self-perpetuating body, composed of persons holding the property and having charge of the financial affairs of the church, also must hold a meeting to concur, if they see fit, in the call voted by the church and to determine the salary of the new Pastor. The action of these two bodies must be laid before the Council; the Candidate is examined by the Council. The ordination is by a committee of three or more Ministers, with the laying on of their hands, in the presence of the congregation. Charges are given to Pastor and people, and a Minister is appointed to represent the ministry and to give to the new Minister the right hand of fellowship in their name.*

How are the Candidates received into the ministry of the Baptist Church?

The Baptist churches are congregational in their polity. They have adopted the following plan in regard to those seeking the ministry: When a young man desires to be a Candidate, he applies to the local church, which after trial of his gifts generally licenses him when he begins his theological studies. The license may be recalled or continued until the young man receives a call to be Pastor of a church; a Council is then summoned to examine and ordain him, as in Congregational churches.

* *Congregationalism*, pp. 136, 152, 168–172.

How are Candidates received into the ministry of the Methodist Church?

In the Methodist Church the communicants are arranged in classes under Class-leaders. Any one on the recommendation of the class, or of the Leaders and Stewards' Meeting of the circuit, may be licensed by the Preacher in charge as an Exhorter. His duties are to hold meetings for prayer and exhortation under the direction of the Preacher in charge, and to attend the District and Quarterly Conferences. The license is for one year, and may be renewed.* Persons are often thus licensed as Exhorters who do not look forward to the ministry. A Local Preacher is one who is licensed from year to year, according to the judgment of the Quarterly Conference, upon passing a prescribed examination. He usually continues in secular business, but may be employed by the Presiding Elder in the pastorate. If he desire ordination, he must submit to a four-year course of study before he can be ordained as a Deacon.† A Deacon is examined by the Annual Conference, and ordained by the laying-on of the hands of a Bishop. His duties as a traveling Deacon are (1) "to administer baptism and solemnize matrimony; (2) to assist the Elder in administering the Lord's Supper; (3) to do all the duties of a traveling Preacher." He may be a Local Deacon, performing these duties occasionally. He must continue his work and fulfill a prescribed course of study for two years before he can be made an Elder.‡ An Elder is examined by the Annual Conference, and ordained by the Bishop and two or more Elders. His duties are those of a Minister in full orders. If a Local

* *Discipline*, 1880, ¶¶ 192, 293. † *Ibid.*, ¶ 91, § 4, and ¶ 189.
‡ *Ibid.*, ¶¶ 172, 174, 175, 189.

Elder, he is stationary, without a particular charge; he exercises his office as occasion may require. If admitted to the Conference as a traveling Elder, he receives annually an appointment as Pastor of a church or churches, and may be reappointed to the same charge for three successive years.* A Presiding Elder is one chosen by the Bishop to preside over a district for not more than four years. He must travel over his district, take charge of the Elders, Deacons and Exhorters, exercise discipline, hold Quarterly Conference, oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the churches, attend the Bishop when present in his district, direct Candidates in their studies, and with other Presiding Elders form the advisory council of the Bishop.† A Bishop is elected by the General Conference and ordained by three Bishops, or at least one Bishop and two Elders. His duties are to preside over Conferences, form districts, fix appointments for Preachers, exercise discipline, travel, oversee the churches, ordain, decide questions of law, and prescribe courses of study for Candidates.‡ (In regard to the Lutheran Church, see p. 203.)

CHAPTER XVI.

OF TRANSLATION, OR REMOVING A MINISTER FROM ONE CHARGE TO ANOTHER.

I. Should the pastoral relation be considered permanent? The Assembly has often called attention to the fact that the constitution of the Presbyterian Church recog-

* *Discipline*, 1880, ¶¶ 160, 169, 170. † *Ibid.*, ¶¶ 164–168.
‡ *Ibid.*, ¶¶ 158–163.

nizes the pastoral relation as a permanent one, "which time and years shall only serve to strengthen and to hallow, and which may suitably represent in outward form the stable tendencies of our orthodox faith. Our people must be encouraged to call Pastors with a view of keeping them, and our Ministers must enter the pastorate to abide."*

When may it be dissolved?

By death, or under circumstances described in the next chapter, or when the Pastor's services are demanded by another church or by the General Assembly in its Boards or seminaries. But "*no Bishop shall be translated from one church to another, nor shall he receive any call for that purpose, but by the permission of the Presbytery.*" If the General Assembly demands his services, the Presbytery may remonstrate, but cannot oppose the action of the supreme court. The Professors of the seminaries are now called by the Directors, subject to the veto of General Assembly.† Before the Assembly has taken action the call may come before Presbytery, as any other call; their decision will be an important item to be considered by the Assembly when it acts upon the choice of the Directors.

II. If the Pastor be of the same Presbytery as the church desiring him, how shall the call be prosecuted?

The call must be made out according to the previous chapter.‡ "*Any church, desiring to call a settled Minister from his present charge, shall, by commissioners properly authorized, represent to the Presbytery the ground on which they plead for his removal.*" This is often the peculiarities of their church, its importance, its field of useful-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 144. See p. 403. † See p. 342.
‡ See p. 368.

ness, being more extended than that now occupied by the Minister, and his special adaptation to their service. "*The Presbytery, having maturely considered their plea, may, according as it appears more or less reasonable, either recommend to them to desist from prosecuting the call, or may order it to be delivered to the Minister to whom it is directed.*" The church has the right to appeal or complain to Presbytery if dissatisfied with this decision. "*If the parties be not prepared to have the matter issued at that Presbytery, a written citation shall be given to the Minister and his congregation to appear before the Presbytery at their next meeting.*" This is to enable all parties concerned to present their views and pleas before the case is issued, and that the Pastor may have time to consider his duty under the circumstances. "*This citation shall be read from the pulpit in that church by a member of the Presbytery, appointed for that purpose, immediately after public worship; so that at least two Sabbaths shall intervene betwixt the citation and the meeting of the Presbytery at which the cause of translation is to be considered.*" This is in accordance with the rule that citations shall be served at least ten days before parties must appear before the court.* In accordance with this citation, a congregational meeting, composed of those who in that congregation have the right to vote for a Pastor, shall be called† to choose and to instruct their commissioners, who shall appear and answer for them the citation of Presbytery. The church calling the Pastor may again appear by commissioners to urge the call. "*The Presbytery, being met and having heard the parties, shall, upon the whole view of the case, either continue him in his former charge, or translate*

* *Book of Discipline*, sect. 19. † See pp. 362, 365.

him, as they shall deem to be most for the peace and edification of the Church; or refer the whole affair to the Synod at their next meeting for their advice and direction." The Presbytery may order the translation, notwithstanding the strong protest of his present charge; that congregation has, however, the right of appeal. But the Presbytery cannot translate a Bishop without his consent.* Sometimes this consent is implied when the Pastor submits the whole case to the wisdom of the Presbytery. The question is not often brought before the Synod except by complaint or appeal.

May this process be shortened?

Generally it is. Indeed, the above directions are only in case "*the parties be not prepared to have the matter issued at that Presbytery.*" The fact that the church has made out a call is often at once communicated to the Minister; if he be disposed to consider the question, he consults his Session, which may deem it expedient to call a congregational meeting to consider the matter and appoint commissioners to represent them when the call is brought before the Presbytery; in which case all parties are prepared to present their pleas, and the whole matter may be issued at that meeting.†

III. How shall the call be prosecuted if the Minister be not of the same Presbytery as the church calling him?

The call is made out as before, and presented for approval to the Presbytery to which that church belongs. "*The congregation shall obtain leave from the Presbytery to which they belong to apply to the Presbytery of which he is a member; and that Presbytery, having cited him and his congregation as before directed, shall proceed to hear and issue the cause.*" This application is made, as before, by the

* See p. 397.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 576-578.

commissioners of the congregation, who carry with them the call and a certified copy of the approval of their Presbytery. All parties shall be heard as before. If the call be approved, and "*if they agree to the translation*," they shall place the call in his hands; and if he express a willingness to accept it, "*they shall release him from his present charge; and, having given him proper testimonials, shall require him to repair to that Presbytery within the bounds of which the congregation calling him lies, that the proper steps may be taken for his regular settlement in that congregation; and the Presbytery to which the congregation belongs, having received an authenticated certificate of his release under the hand of the Clerk of that Presbytery, shall proceed to install him in the congregation as soon as convenient.*" There is some difference of opinion and practice as to which Presbytery places the call in his hands. The language, however, just quoted would seem to assert that the call approved by the Presbytery of the church is sent with the commissioners to that Presbytery of which the Minister is a member, which "*shall proceed to hear and issue the cause.*" He should not be released from his charge nor dismissed from his Presbytery until the call is in his hands and his consent has been obtained. And the Presbytery to which he goes is not directed to do anything save to take "*proper steps for his regular settlement*," or, as it is again expressed, "*having received an authenticated certificate of his release, . . . shall proceed to install him in the congregation as soon as convenient.*"

May this process be shortened?

It may be shortened. (1) The Minister, being informed of the action of the congregation and of the Presbytery, may inform his own people in time for them to appoint commissioners to appear at the first meeting of

their Presbytery.* (2) The Minister, informed that a call has been made out for him, before either Presbytery has taken action may be so clear as to his duty and confident of the action of both Presbyteries, that he may take steps to secure leave to resign his charge, according to ch. xvii.,† and be transferred by his Presbytery to that one within whose bounds the church calling him may be, and thus be ready to receive the call as soon as it may be presented before that body. This is often done when the Presbyteries are at considerable distance or their times of meeting are inconvenient for the other process. In this case the Presbytery, before releasing him from his charge, should be fully informed of the fact and character of the call which he desires to accept.

May a Pastor be translated without his consent?

"*Provided always that no Bishop or Pastor shall be translated without his own consent previously obtained.*" This does not forbid the Presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relation without the consent of the Pastor.‡

IV. What is installment?

"*It consists in constituting a pastoral relation between him and the people of that particular church.*" When a Licentiate receives a call, his installation forms a part of the service of ordination.§ When, however, a Minister is to be settled over a congregation, he is installed only. Installation "*may be performed either by the Presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient.*" It is generally performed by a committee appointed by Presbytery, and composed of those selected to take part in the service.

V. When may installation take place?

"*A day shall be appointed for the installment, at such*

* See p. 405. † See p. 401. ‡ See p. 410. § See p. 381.

time as may appear most convenient, and due notice thereof given to the congregation." It would seem that since the Assembly discourages ordination on the Sabbath, installation should be on some other day; yet, as in ordination, the question is left to the discretion of Presbytery.*

VI. What services should precede installation?

The ordinary service of the church, and "*a sermon shall be delivered by some one of the members previously appointed thereto.*" Sometimes the sermon, by consent of Presbytery, is delivered by a Minister of another Presbytery (considered perhaps as a corresponding member). "*After which the Bishop who is to preside shall state to the congregation the design of their meeting, and briefly recite the proceedings of the Presbytery relative thereto.*"

What promises are required of the Minister?

The following questions are asked of the Minister as he stands near the pulpit before the congregation:

1. "*Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation as their Pastor, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call?*"

2. "*Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his Church?*"

3. "*Do you solemnly promise that by the assistance of the grace of God you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a Pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a Minister of the gospel of Christ, agreeably to your ordination engagements?*"

The answers to these questions should be given in a clear, audible voice.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 370. See p. 380.

What promises are required of the congregation?

The presiding Minister "*shall propose to the people the same or like questions as those directed under the head of ordination,*" to wit:*

1. "*Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive ——— ———, whom you have called to be your Minister?*"

2. "*Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in due exercise of discipline?*"

3. "*Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?*"

4. "*And do you engage to continue to him, while he is your Pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?*"

The people generally remain seated while these questions are proposed, but the service is more impressive, and the obligation is better realized, when the people stand before God and the Presbytery and give their assent.

How are these questions to be answered?

"*By holding up the right hand in testimony of assent.*" This should be regarded as a most solemn covenant with God to be faithful in their duties to their Pastor. It may be given by voice or by bowing the head.

Who should answer these questions?

"*The people*"—all connected with the congregation, especially those who have the right to vote for a Pastor in that congregation.

How should the installation be announced?

Both parties having expressed their readiness to enter

* See p. 382.

into this relation and to perform its duties, and the Presbytery having ordered it, the presiding Minister "*shall solemnly pronounce and declare the said Minister to be regularly constituted the Pastor of that congregation.*" The prayer of installation is then offered, asking the divine approval and blessing.*

What charges are given?

"*A charge shall then be given to both parties, as directed in the case of ordination.*"*

How should the service be closed?

"*After prayer and singing a psalm adapted to the transaction, the congregation shall be dismissed with the usual benediction.*" This is pronounced by the newly-installed Pastor.

VII. How should the people welcome their Pastor?

"*It is highly becoming that, after the solemnity of the installment, the heads of families of that congregation who are then present, or at least the Elders and those appointed to take care of the temporal concerns of that church, should come forward to their Pastor and give him their right hand in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.*"* It is also proper that the children of the church should come forward to greet their Pastor, as they are in a special manner to be under his care.†

Is the service of installation necessary?

Without it a Minister may perform the duties of a Pastor for a time. He is then called a Stated Supply, but he has no seat in the Session nor authority in discipline or government in that congregation.‡ Nevertheless, in 1736 the Synod recognized the pastoral relation between Rev. Mr. Tennent and the church at Neshaminy, although no formal installment had taken place. The

* See p. 385. † See pp. 109, 162. ‡ See p. 48.

omission of the service was not justified by the Synod. The case was peculiar, owing to the condition of the churches at that time, and especially to the fact that Mr. Tennent had for some time in all respects acted, and been regarded by the community, church, Presbytery and Synod, as the Pastor of that congregation.* But now installation is necessary, and should be effected promptly.†

How are Pastors installed in other churches?

In the Episcopal Church the service is called "The Office of Institution of Ministers into Parishes or Churches." It is performed by one or more Presbyters appointed by the Bishop, during which service the Senior Warden presents to the Minister the keys of the church, and the Institutor gives him the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer and the Books of the Canons, to be the "rule of his conduct in dispensing the divine word, in leading the devotions of the people and in exercising discipline in the Church."‡

In the Congregational Church the service resembles our own.§

In the Methodist Church there is no such service, as the Pastors are appointed yearly. Their system is that of itineracy, and not of a settled Ministry.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF RESIGNING A PASTORAL CHARGE.

Can a Pastor resign his charge?

As the pastoral relation is not the result of a mutual

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 419. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 568.
‡ *Book of Common Prayer.* § See p. 389.

agreement between the Minister and the people, but has been approved and constituted by the Presbytery, it cannot be dissolved at the pleasure either of the Pastor or congregation. The Presbytery has full and sole authority.* The Minister cannot at pleasure leave his position and enter upon any other engagement. Neither can the congregation dismiss the Pastor or engage another without the sanction of Presbytery. *"When any Minister shall labor under such grievances in his congregation as that he shall desire leave to resign his pastoral charge, the Presbytery shall cite the congregation to appear, by their commissioners, at their next meeting, to show cause, if they have any, why the Presbytery should not accept the resignation." "And if any congregation shall desire to be released from their pastor, a similar process,* mutatis mutandis, *shall be observed."* This does not imply a want of consultation between the Pastor and people, but that the resignation must be made to the Presbytery, who must judge if the grievances be of such a nature as to render the dissolution of the relation desirable.†

What is meant by "grievance"?

That which burdens, oppresses or injures in the discharge of duty. It may be found in the person or family of the Pastor, or in the community or the congregation, or in the official relation. It may be anything which interferes with or prevents the usefulness of the Pastor, such as sickness, loss of faculties, infirmities of age, the state of health of his family, the needs of the several members thereof, want of proper support, loss of the confidence or affections of the people, positive opposition against him or his work in the church, or the failure of the people to perform the promises made at

* See p. 376. † See p. 209.

the settlement. The grievances of the people may be such as these: their inability to continue the support promised, a growing dissatisfaction with the character of their Minister's services as Preacher or Pastor. A grievance does not include immorality or heresy—when these exist charges should be made before Presbytery*—but a want of adaptation or co-operation on the part of Pastor and people.

Should the pastoral relation be dissolved for slight causes?

The whole chapter implies that the pastoral relation should not be hastily or without grave cause disturbed. The relation should be regarded as permanent, whose influence for good should increase with years.† In 1880 the Assembly declared that, "Whereas the frequent dissolution of the pastoral relation is a growing evil in our Church, arising largely out of the loose opinions which prevail as to the relation of Pastor and people, and the influence of men who regard more the financial than the spiritual interests of the Church; therefore Resolved, 1. That the Presbyteries be reminded of the necessity of giving full and clear instruction on the subject at the time of installation of Pastors. 2. That article xvii. of our 'Form of Government,' in its spirit and letter, should be strictly observed by all our Pastors and churches, and that our Presbyteries be enjoined to seek its rigid enforcement."‡

It is implied in this chapter that even real and serious grievances should be long and patiently borne before any steps are taken, and that the relation be not dissolved until in the judgment of Presbytery and of either Pas-

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. vi. † See p. 392.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 580.

tor or people it be expedient or necessary. "*When any Minister shall labor under such grievances,*" etc.

What steps should be taken by the Pastor?

When it is plain to a Pastor that it is his duty to himself or to the church that he should resign, it would be proper for him (1) to consult one or more of his co-Presbyters; (2) to seek the advice of the Elders, the representatives of the church and his official advisers in all that concerns the congregation; (3) to inform the Session of his determination; (4) to give public notice of his intention to ask Presbytery to release him from his pastoral charge; and (5) to present before that body a written or verbal statement of his desire and of his reason for the request. The Presbytery then "*shall cite the congregation to appear by their commissioners, at their next meeting, to show cause, if any they have, why the Presbytery should not accept the resignation.*"

Can the Presbytery at its first meeting accept the resignation?

The intent of this chapter is to forbid hasty action, and to prevent the dissolution until the church as well as the Pastor be fully heard. If, however, the congregation has been duly informed by the Pastor of his intention, and been invited to unite with him in his request to Presbytery, and if the Session has called a meeting of the congregation to consider the question and to appoint commissioners to appear and answer at the first meeting, then the Presbytery may proceed at once.* At the meeting of the congregation the grievance may appear imaginary or less serious than was supposed, or it may be removed, or love to the Pastor may be found so

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 578. See *Form of Government*, ch. xvi., sect. ii. See p. 395.

general and deep-seated, and the interests at stake to be so great, that the Pastor may be induced to withdraw his notice of resignation. Or it may be ascertained that the Pastor has been misinformed as to the condition of the church and the state of feeling toward him and his work. Or the congregation may be so convinced that he ought not to leave them that they shall refuse to unite with him in his application to Presbytery, and the Pastor may be unwilling to urge his desire against this opposition. In these cases no further step need be taken, save a public notice that he has determined to accede to their desire and remain as their Pastor. But if he continue unchanged in his convictions of duty, the matter must come before Presbytery.

How shall the congregation appear?

"*By their commissioners.*" These must be appointed at the meeting of the congregation called by the Session for this purpose, presided over by the Pastor or by a Minister of the Presbytery chosen by the Pastor and Session, and the voters being those who in that church have the right to vote for a Pastor.* The number of commissioners may be determined by the meeting. Sometimes they are chosen to represent the Session and the congregation, or from different classes of the congregation, or from the majority and the minority if there be a serious division on the matter or no positive decision is arrived at. The object is to place before the Presbytery a true and fair representation of the wishes and views of the people. The commissioners should take with them the authenticated copies of the minutes of the meeting, and be prepared to make, in writing or verbally, further statements if necessary. They may be instructed to join

* See pp. 166, 362.

with the Pastor in his request, or "*to show cause, if any they have, why the Presbytery should not accept the resignation.*" And if they be not satisfied with the action of Presbytery, they have a right to complain to the higher courts.

May the Presbytery decide in opposition to the wishes of the church?

The Presbytery must be duly certified that the congregation has received proper notice and had opportunity to appoint commissioners—that the citations have been duly served. But "*if the congregation fail to appear, or if their reasons for retaining their Pastor be deemed by the Presbytery insufficient, he shall have leave granted to resign his pastoral charge, of which due record shall be made, and that church shall be held vacant till supplied again in an orderly manner with another Minister.*" The responsibility of the decision rests upon the Presbytery. The church or Pastor feeling aggrieved by the decision may appeal or complain to the Synod.

If the congregation shall labor under grievances, what steps should be taken?

Prayer, especially in secret, increased personal activity in co-operation with the Pastor, will certainly lessen, if not remove, the supposed or real grievances. If any new financial burden come upon the congregation, the Trustees should at once consult with the Pastor in regard to it. If the spiritual interests of the church are suffering from any cause, even from the want of necessary qualifications in the Pastor, or from his neglect of duties or lack of spirituality or devotedness, or from sickness or the increasing infirmities of age, it is the duty of the Elders, with much prayer and tenderness, to inform him of the facts. He is over them in the Lord. They have

no right to find fault or to reprove. He is not their servant nor their equal. He is accountable to the Presbytery. But the Elders, as "the representatives of the people," and, "in conjunction with the Pastor," being "charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation," and "to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation,"* ought to keep him informed of everything that hinders his work among them or their growth in grace. If there be any alienation of the congregation, or a general and growing dissatisfaction with his preaching or pastoral work, or if there be a disaffected minority who are exerting an injurious influence, the Elders should know it, and should impart the knowledge to the Pastor, that he may consult with them how to remove these hindrances to his usefulness. Under these trying circumstances the people and the Elders, their representatives, should remember the solemn vows which they made when he was made their Pastor,† and especially if he has grown old in their service. The result of such official fidelity, Christian sympathy and mutual confidence will very often remove the grievances without disturbing the pastoral relation. Sometimes the information has been withheld too long, or the Pastor may conclude that the interests of the church may be best promoted by his resignation, and he will take the necessary steps.‡ But in that case he will respect and love the Elders for their Christian fidelity, and will leave the church harmonious and ready to be benefited by the labors of another Pastor. If, however, the measures proposed by the Session do not remove the grievance, further conference should

* *Form of Government*, ch. v., and ch. ix., sect. vi.

† See p. 382. ‡ See p. 404.

be had between the Elders and the Pastor, and other measures adopted and tried. If these should fail, or if the Pastor should refuse to consider the grievance of the people—which nevertheless continues to interfere with the spiritual edification of the church—the Elders "should apply to some other Bishop of the Presbytery for his advice in the case,"* for the same reasons, among others, as when ill-report or charges are brought against a Minister. Generally, such advice will be given to the Pastor and Elders as will remove the grievance or induce the Pastor to resign his charge. If not, the Elders should very seriously consider the interests of their Pastor and the church, and, if thought necessary, the whole case should by them be brought before Presbytery, the Pastor being kindly informed of their intention. This should be done (1) by a formal reference of the case by vote of Session;† or (2) by a petition of the Elders of the church or of any persons in the congregation;† or (3) the condition of the church may be brought to the consideration of Presbytery on the review of the minutes of Session.‡ If the case be very urgent, the Session may, on their own motion or at request of the people,§ call a meeting of the congregation to appoint commissioners to appear before Presbytery at its next meeting and state their grievances, as in the case of the Pastor laboring under grievances. The Presbytery will act as before, citing both parties to show cause, etc.

May a congregation, desiring the resignation of the Pastor, make grievances to induce him to resign?

No. That were unchristian and a violation of the vows made by the people at his installation. They are

* *Old Book of Discipline.*

† *Book of Discipline*, sect. 77.

‡ *Ibid.*, sect. 71.

§ See pp. 166, 362.

bound to "receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline;" "to encourage him in his arduous labors, and to assist his endeavors for their instruction and spiritual edification."* Any open or secret opposition, personal or organized, is a violation of these vows, and renders the person or persons so engaged liable to charges as disturbers of the peace of the Church.

May the congregation signify their dissatisfaction by diminishing the Pastor's salary?

That were unmanly, unchristian and a violation of the contract in the call and of the vows made at his installation.†

Is the Pastor's presence necessary at the congregational meeting?

No. The call for the meeting must come from the Session.‡ If the Pastor declines to be present, or if the Session deem it advisable, they should invite some other Bishop of the Presbytery to moderate the meeting.§ If the application to dissolve the pastoral relation comes from the Pastor, as well as from the congregation, the meeting is valid without his presence and co-operation. So the O. S. Assembly decided.‖

May the Presbytery dissolve the relation on the petition of a minority?

It may. However the case may be brought before the Presbytery, by the general review, by petition of Pastor or of Elders or of the congregation or of a minority, that court has the power to render the decision, which must be determined, not by the wishes of the parties, but by the interests of the Pastor and the church. The

* See p. 383. † See p. 370. ‡ See p. 362. § See p 363.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 578.

right must be recognized "of each congregation to decide whether a Pastor is acceptable to them, and the wishes of a majority are to be set aside only for weighty reasons; yet such a state of things may exist between the Pastor and a portion of his people as shall require for the fair name of religion that the relation be dissolved." So the O. S. Assembly decided.*

May the relation be dissolved contrary to the wishes of the Pastor?

Yes, for the same reasons. The Presbytery may dissolve the relation without the consent of the Congregation.† The parties have the right of complaint.

How is the church to be declared vacant?

The dissolution takes effect on the act of Presbytery, if no time is designated.† The Moderator should then declare the relation dissolved. A member of the Presbytery should be appointed to preach in that church on a certain Lord's Day, and in the name of the Presbytery to declare the pulpit vacant. Generally, permission is given to the Session to supply their pulpit until the next meeting of the Presbytery.

How do Pastors resign in other churches?

In the Episcopal Church "a Rector, canonically elected and in charge, or an instituted Minister, may not resign his parish without consent of the said parish or its Vestry (if the Vestry be authorized to act in the premises); nor may such Rector or Minister be removed therefrom by said parish or Vestry against his will," except under certain circumstances. Any difficulty arising between Rector and parish "which may not be satisfactorily settled by the godly judgment of the Bishop alone, . . . the Bishop, acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 580. † *Ibid.*, p. 578.

of the diocese, . . . shall be the ultimate arbitrator and judge." If the Rector's resignation is accepted by the Vestry, the fact should be reported to the Bishop for his approval.*

In the Congregational Church, when a Pastor wishes to resign his charge he notifies his congregation of the fact, and sends his letter of resignation to a meeting of the church and also to the society, who take separate action thereon, and call a Council "to devise and act . . . in the emergency, and to give the Minister a parting letter of recommendation."†

In the Methodist Church the Minister in charge is appointed only for one year, and if possible he will bear the grievance until the end of his appointment, informing the Presiding Elder and the Bishop of his desire to be sent to some other church at the next Annual Conference. If, however, for any reason, he desires to leave the church before the end of the year, he must obtain permission to do so from the Presiding Elder and Bishop.‡

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF MISSIONS.

What is meant by "missions"?

The word "mission" is used to indicate the act of sending or being sent by authority to do a certain work; or the persons sent especially to propagate religion; or the station of missionaries. The word is here used to

* *Digest of the Canon*, title ii., canon iv.

† *Congregational Manual*, p. 10; *Congregationalism*, pp. 198–205.

‡ *Discipline*, 1880, ¶¶ 160, 166.

include the authority and the efforts of the Church to extend its boundaries, and especially to preach the gospel to the destitute within the bounds of Presbyteries throughout our land and in other countries.

When vacancies occur in a Presbytery, what should be done?

The Presbytery has the oversight of the territory assigned to it by the General Assembly, and should feel its responsibility to see that the gospel is faithfully preached to all within its bounds.* If any of its churches be vacant, it should take such action as may be necessary to secure for them Pastors,† and to provide regular services for each during its vacancy.‡ "*When vacancies become so numerous in any Presbytery that they cannot be supplied with frequent administrations of the word and ordinances, it shall be proper for such Presbytery, or vacant congregation within their bounds, with leave of the Presbytery, to apply to any other Presbytery, or to any Synod, or to the General Assembly, for such assistance as they can afford.*" This applies to the destitute fields within the bounds of the Presbytery, as well as to the organized churches.

What assistance may be expected?

1. Ministers and Licentiates, who should be furnished with proper certificates. "*When any Presbytery shall send any of their Ministers or Probationers to distant vacancies, the Missionary shall be ready to produce his credentials to the Presbytery or Presbyteries through the bounds of which he may pass, or at least to a committee thereof, and obtain their approbation.*"

2. Pecuniary help should be given. "*Provided always*

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 321. † See p. 218.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xxi. See pp. 358, 547.

. . . *that the judicatory sending them make the necessary provision for their support and reward in the performance of this service.*" When the vacant church is able to support a Minister, then the means will not be "necessary," and the church should soon proceed to make out a call for him to be settled over them.* In 1709 the Ministers of London promised to send two itinerant Ministers to help the Church in this country and support them for two years, but "they drew back their hand," and in 1710 the Presbytery of Philadelphia applied to the Presbytery of Dublin to send and support one young Minister for one year.†

To whom are these Missionaries responsible?

Ministers are always responsible to the Presbyteries to which they belong.‡ This is true, though they may derive their support entirely from some other source, and though they may be called upon to report the advance of their work to some other body or bodies. When laboring within the bounds of another Presbytery, a Minister must "*be ready to produce his credentials to that Presbytery, . . . and obtain their approbation.*" It is of course advisable that as soon as possible the church or mission-field and the Missionary should belong to the same Presbytery, if he intend to labor there any length of time. He cannot be settled over a church while belonging to another Presbytery.§

May the General Assembly send missions?

The application for assistance may be made "*to any other Presbytery, or to any Synod, or to the General Assembly.*" Further, the General Assembly, having supreme authority over the whole Church, without any application

* See p. 362. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 322.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 658. See p. 210. § See pp. 182, 186.

"*may of their own knowledge send missions to any part to plant churches or to supply vacancies.*" The Presbytery has the prerogative of examining and ordaining, judging of the qualifications of its members, and of directing the work within its own bounds.* The General Assembly "*may direct any Presbytery to ordain Evangelists, or Ministers without relation to particular churches.*" †

May Ministers be sent without their consent?

"*Provided always that such missions be made with the consent of the parties appointed.*" In 1759, 1764, and 1770 such appointments were made by Synod.

What was the "Church at Home and Abroad"?

In 1886 the Assembly ordered that there shall be but one authorized periodical to present the work and claims of all the Boards, to be called "The Church at Home and Abroad." A special committee was appointed, and Rev. H. A. Nelson, D. D., was chosen editor.§

What was "The Assembly Herald"?

It was an inexpensive Missionary paper, ordered by the Assembly in 1894. Rev. W. H. Hubbard and Rev. Rufus S. Greene, D. D., were appointed editors. The materials were to be furnished by the Boards. It was issued monthly except for July and August.‡

In 1897 a Committee was appointed to consider all questions relating to these publications. In 1898 it was decided that "The Church at Home and Abroad" and "The Assembly Herald" be discontinued after January 1, 1899, and that a single monthly magazine, representing all the Boards, called "The Assembly Herald," be issued in New York under the supervision of a Committee of two ministers and three Elders. Rev. Albert B. Robinson is the Editor for the first year.§

* See pp. 201, 205, 210. † See p. 386.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 403, 404. § *Minutes G. A. 1898*, pp. 79, 88.

Board of Home Missions.

How early did our Church take action on missions?

At the first meeting of which the records remain, in 1707, the General Presbytery adopted the following resolution: "That every Minister of the Presbytery supply neighboring desolate places where a Minister is wanting and opportunity of doing good offers."* At the first meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia it was resolved that it be "proposed to the several members of the Synod to contribute something to the raising a fund for pious uses, and that they use their interest with their friends on proper occasions to contribute something to the same purpose; and that there be chosen a Treasurer to keep what shall be collected, and that what is or may be gathered be disposed of according to the discretion of the Synod." Mr. Jedidiah Andrews was appointed. The next day the collection "was weighed and delivered into his hands," "the just sum of eighteen pounds one shilling and sixpence, for which he obliges himself, his heirs, executors and administrators, to be accountable to the Synod."† "This was the first fund for benevolent purposes created by the Presbyterian Church in this country." Appeals for aid were sent to England, Scotland and Ireland, and some additions were thus obtained to the fund of the Synod. The first appropriation from this fund was made by the Synod "to the Presbyterian congregation of New York, toward the support of the gospel among them." It was further ordered that every Minister belonging to this Synod receive a letter "recommending a yearly collection to be gathered in every

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 10.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 50; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 323.

particular congregation for pious uses, to be sent yearly to the Synod by their Minister or Elder." In 1738 "it was unanimously agreed by all the members of Synod that every Minister shall either" take up such annual collection, "or oblige themselves to pay out of their own proper estates ten shillings to the fund."* The first itinerant Missionaries, three in number, were appointed in 1722.†

What is an itinerant Missionary?

He is one appointed to travel over a certain district, preaching in destitute places. At first these were appointed for temporary work, to make a single tour, sometimes merely for three months, but generally until the next meeting of the judicatory. A special route was designated by the court, which the Missionary was required to pursue. He was not expected to preach to established congregations.‡ He was required to preach, to "form societies, help them in adjusting their bounds, ordain Elders, administer sealing ordinances, instruct the people in discipline, and finally direct them in their after conduct, particularly in what manner they shall proceed to obtain a stated ministry, and whatever else may appear useful or necessary for those churches."§ Often he was required to establish regular mission-stations, and visit them at regular times until developed into organized churches. In the O. S. Church in 1839 and 1844 all Pastors were urged to make annually a missionary tour of this character.‖ In the N. S. body, in 1852, "each Presbytery, whose circumstances as to territory, churches

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 56, 57, 136.

† *Ibid.*, p. 74; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 326.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 346; *New Digest*, p. 320.

§ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 328, 345; *New Digest*, pp. 320, 324.

‖ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 358.

and members demand it, is recommended to appoint an itinerant Missionary within its bounds," and each Synod "to appoint such a Missionary, whose duty it shall be to act as a traveling Evangelist, after the scriptural pattern, to explore destitute fields, to prepare the way for the formation of new churches by the Presbyteries, to seek for Ministers to take charge of them, to assist and direct in building houses of worship in destitute places."*

What was the origin of the Boards?

At the first meeting of the General Assembly, in 1789, the importance of missions was recognized, and each Synod was requested to recommend at the next meeting "two members well qualified to be employed in missions on our frontier;" and the Presbyteries were enjoined "to have collections made during the present year in the several congregations under our care." The next year a committee of five was appointed "to prepare certain directions necessary for the Missionaries of the Assembly in fulfilling the design of their mission, and to specify the compensation that it will be proper to make them for their services." They reported the next day, and two Missionaries were appointed to labor for at least three months in the frontier settlements of New York and Pennsylvania, and salaries were voted for them. This committee became one of the standing committees of the General Assembly. In 1799 a report was adopted on the method of managing missions, recommending (1) that the missions should be conducted by men really qualified, who shall preach the doctrines of grace, organize churches, catechise from house to house; (2) they should "be well acquainted with the forms of government, as well of the Congregational as of the Presbyte-

* *New Digest*, p. 364.

rian Church;" (3) it is important that one or more persons of suitable qualifications be appointed "to be a common medium of information, and for aiding and directing such Missionaries as may be annually sent out by the General Assembly;" (4) that the Missionaries go two and two, and their routes be prescribed by General Assembly; (5) that the "Confession of Faith" and "System of Discipline" of this Church be distributed by the Missionaries.* In 1800 four Boards were anticipated: (1) Gospelizing the Indians; (2) instructing the negroes; (3) distributing Bibles, books and tracts; (4) educating young men for the ministry.† In 1802 the Assembly created a Standing Committee of Missions—four Ministers and three Elders. Its duties were to obtain information, to nominate Missionaries, direct them to places and in their work, to correspond, obtain reports, inquire concerning funds, to select a Minister to preach the annual missionary sermon before the Assembly, and to superintend the missionary business under the direction of the General Assembly. This committee were empowered to call upon the Trustees of the General Assembly, during its recess, for moneys needed. In 1805 this Standing Committee of Missions was increased to seventeen, of which ten resided in or near Philadelphia, and one other member from each Synod. In 1816 the committee was enlarged, and its title changed to "the Board of Missions, acting under the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States."‡

What is the difference between a Standing Committee and a Permanent Committee?

The standing committees are appointed at the opening

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 341–349. † *Ibid.*, p. 312.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 422, 423.

of each Assembly, and continue until they report and are discharged by that body. The permanent committees are those outside of the Assembly, and are not dissolved by its adjournment.* This distinction was made by the N. S. Church, and the permanent committees had the oversight of the benevolent work of the Church, as the Boards had in the O. S. body, but were more directly dependent on the Assembly than the Boards. Before the division, however, the term "Standing Committees" was not so strictly defined. The Standing Committee on Missions was in 1802 required to be appointed yearly.† Unordained men cannot be put on these Committees.‡

What is the difference between a Standing or Permanent Committee and a Board?

A committee, standing or permanent, is "bound in all cases to act according to the instructions of the Assembly, and is under the necessity of receiving its sanction to all the measures which it may propose." A Board has "full powers to transact all the business of the missionary cause, only requiring the Board to report annually to the General Assembly." It can carry on its work with vigor and unity, with the advice and counsel of the Assembly.† No officer or employé, nor member of other Boards, nor more than one Elder from a church, can be a member of a Board.§ Salaried executive officers of Boards are subject to approval of G. Assembly.‖

What powers were granted to the Board of Missions?

The Board was further authorized to appoint Missionaries, to pay moneys to them, and to establish auxiliary missionary societies throughout our churches.

* *New Digest*, p. 361. † *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 350–353.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1896*, p. 145. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 264.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 132.

It was thought best that the Board should confine its work to domestic missions, lest the pressure of business become too severe. But the Board had "the power to establish missions not only among the destitute in our own country or any other country, but also among the heathen in any part of the world," and to take charge of such missions. It had power also to appoint an Executive Committee and agents. In 1828 the Board was increased to twenty-six Ministers and fifteen Elders.*

What further changes were made?

In 1830 an effort was made to conduct the missionary operations in the West through a common Board of Agency, appointed by the Board of Missions of the General Assembly and the American Home Missionary Society. This failed after considerable discussion. The idea, however, was not given up, and until the division of the Church in 1838 several efforts were made to effect a union between these bodies or to discontinue the Board of Missions. The Presbyteries carried on their missionary operations through our Board or through the American Home Missionary Society. The New School Presbyteries and churches co-operated with the latter, and the Old School with the former. After the division the N. S. Assembly continued to do so until 1861, when the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions was formed.*

What is the American Home Missionary Society?

Prior to 1822 various local domestic missionary societies were formed. Many of these sent their missionaries even to the far West and South. In May of that year delegates of ten of these local societies in New York State, belonging to the Presbyterian and the Dutch Re-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 342.

formed churches, were consolidated, forming the "United Domestic Missionary Society of New York." It was not a denominational institution. In 1826 it had 127 Missionaries, 100 of whom labored in New York, and 27 in ten other States. In 1825 a circular was published by its Executive Committee, at the request of a meeting of Ministers held in Boston, calling a meeting of Congregational, Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches, to be held in the Brick Presbyterian Church, New York, to form a National Domestic Missionary Society. Drs. Alexander and Miller of the Princeton Seminary endorsed the plan. A constitution was adopted, and the "United Domestic Missionary Society" was requested to become the "American Home Missionary Society" by accepting this constitution and changing its name. This was done May 12, 1826. One of the preliminary principles was, "that existing missionary societies were neither to be superseded, except in accordance with their own desire, nor impeded in their operations, but rather to be strengthened and stimulated."* For a time this society and our Board of Missions† worked together harmoniously; but for some time before 1837 there was in many a "deep conviction that the Home Missionary Society, under the management of its Secretary, had become a great party engine, operating most unfavorably for the peace, union and purity of the Church."‡

What was "the Standing Committee on Church Extension"?

In 1849 the N. S. Assembly, while co-operating with the American Home Missionary Society, felt called upon to take charge of that part of the work which the socie-

* *Home Missionary*, vol. xxxiii., pp. 157–166. † See p. 420.

‡ *Church Polity*, pp. 417–435.

ty could not perform. Presbyteries were admonished to secure supplies for all their feeble churches, and to gather new congregations by permanent missionary agents. Sabbath-school work was urged, and the building of new churches with aid secured in their vicinity, or in more distant places when furnished with testimonials from their Synods. The next year Presbyteries were recommended to take such action within their own bounds that new churches may be organized, if necessary, by aid from the Home Missionary Society, and that destitute churches be supplied with regular preaching. The older and wealthier churches were expected to help the weaker. In 1852, on report of a committee appointed the previous year, the American Home Missionary Society was recommended as the agency through which, as heretofore, the work of domestic missions shall be done; but each Presbytery was directed each year to elect a Standing Committee on Church Extension. Collections from the churches shall be sent to the Home Missionary Society. Applications for aid must have the recommendation of Presbytery, but "shall not require the official sanction of any agent of that society." The society, however, shall have the right to obtain information, and have discretion to grant in whole or in part the application. The Presbyteries shall appoint itinerant Missionaries to explore destitute fields, gather new congregations, seek for Ministers to take charge of them, direct in building churches, and in all ways promote church extension, under presbyterial or synodical committees. Each Synod shall have a Church Extension Committee, yearly appointed, and shall require an annual collection from its churches to assist, by loan or gift, feeble churches to build houses. Among the other Standing Committees of the Assembly, one on

Church Extension shall be yearly appointed, which shall condense the reports from the Synods and Presbyteries on this subject, and present further propositions for carrying on the work. A committee of five was appointed to confer with the "American Home Missionary Society," requesting its co-operation in this plan as far as its principles would admit. In 1853 this committee of conference reported that the society had no disposition to interfere with the ecclesiastical functions of Synods and Presbyteries, or with the relations of the churches, or to make discriminations in favor of one denomination and against another. Confidence was expressed by the Assembly that our home missionary work could be more successfully prosecuted under the present arrangements with that society than by any new organization. At the same time the Assembly was satisfied that the rules of the society sometimes prevented the extension of the Church in the West, and where aid should be granted.*

What was "the Church Extension Committee"?

In 1855 the attention of the N. S. Assembly was directed to cases of home work which are excluded by the rules of the Home Missionary Society, as the employment of synodical, presbyterial or exploring Presbyterian Missionaries, the planting of Presbyterian churches in advance of all others, and the founding of churches in cities and large villages. The Assembly, while operating through the society for some purposes, did not give to it a right to control the whole subject of Church Extension, nor could it part with its own responsibility. It therefore established a committee to be called "the Church Extension Committee," to be located in Philadelphia, having no functions except those expressly assigned to

* *New Digest*, pp. 361–367.

it. Those first given were—"employing presbyterial, synodical and other Presbyterian itinerant or exploring agents, and affording aid in such exceptional cases as those already mentioned, and also the receiving and disbursing funds for these objects." It was not intended to establish an ecclesiastical Board or to interfere with the Home Missionary Society. The co-operative policy of the Church in home missions was unchanged. This committee was to be supplementary, to attend to cases which the rules of the society excluded. In 1857 more discretion was granted to the committee in relation to applications which required prompt action. In 1859 its powers were again enlarged, to provide for churches that could not be aided from other sources.*

What was "the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions"?

It was organized by the N. S. Assembly in 1861, and incorporated the next year. It was composed of fifteen members chosen by the Assembly. Its object was "to assist in sustaining the preaching of the gospel in feeble churches and congregations in connection with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and generally to superintend the whole course of home missions in behalf of said Church, as its General Assembly may from time to time direct; also to receive, take charge of and disburse any property or funds which at any time and from time to time may be entrusted to said Church or said committee for home missionary purposes." This continued its work until 1871.†

What was "the Western Committee of Missions"?

In 1845 the O. S. Assembly, in order to prosecute its

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 425.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 340. See p. 426.

missions in the West with more vigor, decided that the Board of Missions should appoint a committee, to be called "the Western Committee of Missions," to be located at Louisville, Ky., to have similar powers with that located in Philadelphia, making monthly reports to the Board. It had a Secretary and General Agent and Treasurer.* This was continued until 1862.†

What was "the South-western Advisory Committee"?

In 1859 the O. S. Assembly ordered the Board of Missions to establish in the city of New Orleans an Advisory Committee, with a District Secretary, "to set forward the work of missions in the South-west, the details to be arranged by conference between the Board and the said committee." "The Board was also empowered to make a similar arrangement at the North-west." This Advisory Committee was located at San Francisco. Both these committees were discontinued by order of the Assembly in 1862, and the Board of Missions was directed "hereafter to conduct throughout the entire field its work, as formerly, through the Presbyteries."‡

What was "the Board of Domestic Missions"?

This was the same as the Board of Missions. In 1857 the General Assembly approved the action of the Board in obtaining from the Legislature of Pennsylvania a change in its corporate title—viz., the introduction of the word "Domestic"—to prevent inconvenience and loss which was occasioned by the frequent confounding the Board of Missions and that of Foreign Missions.§

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 355.
† *Minutes G. A.* (*O. S.*), *1862*, p. 602.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1859*, p. 530; *1860*, p. 55; *1862*, p. 602.
§ *Ibid.*, *1857*, pp. 19, 75.

What was "the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions"?

After the reunion of the two branches (O. S. and N. S.) of the Church in 1869, the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions obtained an act from the New York Legislature authorizing the substitution of "Board" for "Committee" in its title.*

What is "the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

In 1869 the Board of Domestic Missions and the Committee of Home Missions were continued until proper legal steps could be taken to consolidate them without risking their property and funds. This was accomplished in 1872, and the new Board, "The Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America" obtained a charter from the State of New York. In 1873 by an act of the State of Pennsylvania the property of the Board of Domestic Missions was transferred to the new Board, which became the legal successor of both.† The Indian Missions originated under the Board of Foreign Missions, but were transferred in 1893 to this Board by the Assembly.‡

How are applications for aid to be made to the Board?

The Missionary and his field of labor must be in connection with the G. Assembly. The application should state (1) the names of the church and Minister; (2) the amount of salary needed for his support, the amount pledged by the church and how it is to be raised; the sum raised last year, and that needed this; (3) the number of communicants, average of attendants, size of the Sabbath-school; (4) buildings owned by the church; (5) the population of the place, business, prospect of growth; (6) the distance from a Presbyterian

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 343. † *Ibid.*, pp. 346, 347.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1893*, pp. 82, 306. See p. 464.

church and from those of other denominations. The application must be signed by the Elders, Deacons, and Trustees, and sent to the Presbytery, which shall vote on it and the amount by ballot as to approval and forward it to the Board. In 1896 the Assembly ordered that at the beginning of the fiscal year each Presbytery shall send to the Board a careful estimate of the total amount needed to aid its mission churches, and the Board shall inform the Presbyterial Committee the total amount it is able to grant and the Committee shall apportion this among the churches and report to the Board.* In 1898 it was ordered that each Synod having a Synodical plan shall before the first of April of each year report to the Board and to the Assembly the amount needed for its missions. That those Synods not having such plan, shall have right to modify the amounts asked for, so that an equal distribution be made among them according to their necessities, and the appropriation shall be made in bulk to each Synod on the estimated contributions and expenditures of the Presbyteries.†

Is the Board bound to grant every application?

The Presbytery must consider, Ought the Church to receive aid and to what amount? And the Board must determine what appropriation can be granted. In 1883 it was decided that the Board should not decline the application of Presbytery unless its funds are needed by more deserving and promising fields.‡ See page 233. The salaries are to be paid monthly.§

What is the relation of the Board to the Presbytery in regard to missions?

"The Board of Missions is an ecclesiastical organization, and operates through the Presbyteries; its success,

* *Minutes G. A. 1896*, p. 51. † *Ibid., 1898*, p. 27.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 347. § *Minutes G. A. 1895*, p. 76.

therefore, must depend essentially on the co-operation of the Presbyteries and the efficiency of their aid." The supply of suitable missionaries and information of mission fields must come from the Presbyteries.* The Missionary and his work are under the direction of his Presbytery, but he must report to the Board while receiving an appropriation.† Feeble vacant churches should be nourished by Presbytery till prepared to be aided by the Board.‡ In 1894 a plan of co-operation of Boards and church courts was adopted by the churches in the western section of the Presbyterian Alliance, in which the authority of the Courts is recognized, comity is enjoined toward other churches, the undue multiplication of churches in small communities discouraged, and differences of opinion to be referred to the Missionary Boards interested.§ In 1894 our Home Board was urged to push city evangelization, observing the rules of interdenominational comity and Presbyteries to supervise the location of new churches and removal of old ones.‖ In 1889 an additional Secretary was appointed to direct missions among immigrants.¶ In 1897 the Assembly decided there should be but one Secretary.**

What is the Sustentation Departmemt of the Board?

(See p. 501.)

What is "the Woman's Board of Home Missions"?

"The work of Christian women in behalf of home missions dates as far back as the beginning of home missions in this country." It was carried on chiefly in prayer and in the preparation of boxes for the Missionaries. After the reunion there was an increased activity

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 361. † See p. 413.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 176. § *Minutes G. A. 1896*, p. 68.
‖ *Ibid., 1894*, p. 138. ¶ *Ibid., 1889*, p. 86. ** *Ibid., 1897*, p. 56.

on the part of the women, and they were invited by the Board to make organized efforts to collect money for the Board. A deep interest was excited also in the condition of women in heathen lands, who were in great degradation and inaccessible to our Missionaries. In some places in our own country, as in Utah, New Mexico and Arizona, their condition was much the same, and they were perhaps quite as isolated. This great need for "women's work for women" led to the organization of women's missionary societies and women's boards for missions, their object being to collect funds and to send out women to labor among their sisters at home and abroad. Some have embraced both the home and foreign field. They were all more or less connected with the Boards of the Church, and some had committees or branch societies in the Synods, Presbyteries and churches. In 1878 a convention of women was held in Pittsburg during the session of the General Assembly in regard to some more complete organization for home missions. It led to a proposition to the Ladies' Board of Missions in New York to devote itself exclusively to home missions. This was declined and the "Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church" was organized. Its office was in New York.* There were in 1881 five women's societies auxiliary to the Board. Of these, the "Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions" was the largest. It was composed of two members of each Synodical committee. In 1897 its name was changed to "THE WOMAN'S BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS." It has (in 1898) under its care 23 boarding schools and 90 day schools, and with the Young People's Societies raised during the year $324,348.†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 348. † *Minutes G. A. 1898*, pp. 52, 234.

The Assembly has frequently called the attention of the Woman's Board to the increased activity of Mormonism since the admission of Utah as a State.*

Board of Education.

What were the early measures of the Church to educate young men for the ministry?

The General Synod in 1733 granted an appropriation from its "fund for pious uses" to a student. In 1739 an overture was approved for the erection of a school or seminary of learning by the Synod. A commission was appointed to accomplish it, which adopted a plan, applied to the churches for aid and drew up an appeal also to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The war between England and Spain caused "the whole affair to be laid aside for that time." In 1743 the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, New Castle and Donegal agreed to open a school for the education of youth, and the Synod at its next meeting (1744) approved of this action and took the school under its care. The object to be accomplished was to give free instruction in the languages, philosophy and divinity. The school was placed under the charge of Rev. Francis Alison, who was allowed an usher, and was to be supported by yearly contributions from the churches. For a few years (1757–62) the school received annually a sum from "the Trustees General of the society's schools for the instruction of poor Germans, etc. in Pennsylvania, etc.," on condition "that the master shall teach four Dutch or English (young men) gratis, upon the recommendation of the Trustees General, to be prepared for the ministry, and ten poor Dutch children in the English tongue, gratis." †

* *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 53.

† *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 106, 149, 151, 175, 228.

See p. 338.

When was the College of New Jersey founded?

In 1746, at Elizabethtown, by the Synod of New York. It was the fourth college established in the country (Harvard University in 1636, William and Mary College in 1692, and Yale in 1700). It was removed to Princeton in 1757.* In 1752 the Synod ordered collections to be taken in the churches for the college, and the next year Revs. G. Tennent and S. Davies were sent to Europe to solicit aid for it. The address sent to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland stated that the object of the college was to educate pious young men for the ministry, and thus enable the Church to supply the increasing number of vacancies and the destitute fields in its bounds. In 1768 the United Synod of New York and Philadelphia approved of the appointment of a Professor of Theology in the college, and made appropriation from collections for his support. There was also a fund in the hands of the Trustees, the interest of which was applied by the Synod to aid poor and pious students.† The General Assembly in 1806 declared "the College of New Jersey was originally founded with a particular view to promote the interests of religion, as well as of learning, by training up men of piety and talents for the ministry of the gospel. The Trustees of the institution have ever been attentive to this great object, and have made most generous provision for the support of theological students. . . . All persons who are actually engaged in the study of theology . . . may, on producing proper testimonials of character, pursue their further studies here at the

* *American Cyclopædia.*

† *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 248, 252, 256, 379, 399

See p. 338.

moderate charge of one dollar a week for board, and enjoy the assistance of the President and Professor of Theology without any fee for instruction. This Professor gives lectures to the theological students twice a week. . . . His course of lectures embraces divinity, ecclesiastical history, church government, Christian and Jewish antiquities, and the duties of the pastoral office. He instructs those who desire it in the Hebrew language, so useful and almost indispensable to a good divine. At every meeting one or more of the pupils submit to his criticisms and remarks an essay or sermon on a subject previously assigned." A theological society was held once a week, and access was granted to a large theological library.* At present the college has no theological department, according to an agreement made when the Assembly established a seminary in Princeton,† but it generously aids Candidates.

What presbyterial scheme for education was approved?

In 1771 the Presbytery of New Castle transmitted to the Synod a plan which was approved by it, and other Presbyteries were encouraged to do likewise. The plan was, that vacant churches in the Presbytery subscribe annually two pounds, and every Minister in the Presbytery one pound, and the fund be increased by voluntary annual subscriptions. Young men to be aided must be recommended by a Minister and examined and approved by Presbytery, which shall direct his studies and have a right to his services for one year after his ordination. If the student be afterward not inclined to enter the ministry, he must return the money expended upon him within five years.‡ In 1806 the General As-

* *Assembly's Digest*, ed. of 1855, p. 376. † See p. 434.

‡ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 419.

sembly urged upon the Presbyteries to report each year what they were doing for the selection of young men for the ministry, for their support, education and training, and reasons were demanded for neglect of this important duty. Those Presbyteries which did not render satisfactory excuses were liable to be recorded as delinquents in their duty or censured by the Assembly.*

When was the Theological Seminary at Princeton established?

In 1809 the Presbytery of Philadelphia sent an overture to the General Assembly for the establishment of a theological school. A committee on the subject was appointed. Its chairman was Rev. Dr. Dwight, President of Yale College, a delegate from the General Association of Connecticut. It reported three plans: (1) to establish one great school near the centre of the bounds of our Church; (2) two schools, one North and the other South; and (3) one school in each Synod, in which case each Synod should have the whole responsibility as to the formation and supervision of its school. According to the other plans, the General Assembly should have the control. These were referred to the Presbyteries, but without definite result. In 1810 the Assembly determined to establish a seminary "for securing to Candidates for the ministry more extensive and efficient theological instruction." The institution should have three Professors, but might begin with less. Its course should embrace divinity, Oriental and biblical literature, ecclesiastical history and church government, and such other subjects as might be deemed necessary. Efforts were to be made to give gratuitous instruction and support when necessary. A committee from each Synod was appointed to solicit funds

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 397.

The Presbyteries were left at full liberty to send their students where they pleased for instruction, and to license those only whom they approved on examination; the seminary to have no such power. In 1811 the Trustees of the College of New Jersey made an offer to the General Assembly, which was accepted the next year. Its principal terms were: (1) that the seminary shall be in or near Princeton, and in connection with the college; (2) that the General Assembly shall appoint the Directors, choose Professors, determine the instruction, govern the students and manage the funds, without interference from the Trustees of the college; (3) that buildings needed for the seminary may be erected on the college grounds by the Assembly, or on land purchased in or near Princeton; (4) that the use of the college buildings shall be granted as far as practicable and as long as may be desired; (5) that the college will instruct at as little expense as possible young men sent to it by the Assembly or the Directors of the seminary; (6) the Trustees shall be ready to take charge of funds, separate from those of the college, subject to the order of the General Assembly; (7) free use of the college library shall be granted to the Professors and students. This connection between the college and seminary was to continue according to the pleasure of the Assembly, but it was agreed that "while the seminary shall remain in Princeton no professorship of theology shall be established in the college."* A missionary department was proposed as early as 1829.† All the seminaries of the Church are alike in their plans of instruction and government.‡

What are synodical seminaries?

Each Presbytery and Synod was competent to adopt its

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 369-375.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 440. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 375-397.

own plan for the instruction of its Candidates. This was sanctioned by the General Assembly. Those seminaries which were under the control of Synods were called synodical seminaries. Among these were "the Union Seminary of the General Assembly, under the care of the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina;" Columbia Seminary, whose title was "the Theological Seminary of the Synods of South Carolina and Georgia;" the New Albany Seminary, which was under the care of seven Western Synods (and after its reorganization in 1854 under three Synods). These had the sanction of the General Assembly. The Seminary of the Synod of Kentucky, and the South-western Seminary, under the care of the Synod of Tennessee, were refused such recognition.* The Indiana Theological Seminary, at South Hanover, afterward moved to New Albany, was under the care of several Synods,† and the San Francisco Seminary was organized by the Synod of the Pacific.‡

What seminaries were under presbyterial supervision?

"The Seminary at Auburn was controlled by a Board of Commissioners elected by certain Presbyteries in Central and Western New York, and by a Board of Trustees elected by commissioners."§ The German Theological School was founded by the Presbytery of Newark, and the Biddle University at Charlotte, North Carolina.‖

What seminaries were independent?

"Lane Seminary, at Cincinnati, and Union Seminary, at New York, were founded by individuals, members of the Presbyterian Church." By their charters they were Presbyterian institutions, teaching our standards, but were

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 461–471. † See p. 340. ‡ See p. 341
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 441. ‖ See pp. 340, 342.

not under ecclesiastical control.* Also the German Theological School of the North-west; and the Blackburn University, at Carlinville, Ill., which was founded by the Rev. G. Blackburn.† See page 341.

What are fellowships?

There has been a desire to secure a high order of culture in biblical literature. To accomplish this, in 1876 "a Prize Fellowship Fund" was begun in Union Theological Seminary, and two fellowships more, of $10,000 each, were secured, to enable "students who shall be, in the judgment of the Faculty, most deserving, to prosecute their studies in this country or in foreign countries, under the direction of the Faculty, for the period of two years after graduation."‡ In the Princeton Seminary in 1880 a fellowship was secured yielding $600 in quarterly payments. It is offered to the member of the graduating class or to the resident graduate approved by the Faculty who shall stand highest in a special examination in April on Hebrew. He will be expected to spend at least one year in Old-Testament study under the direction of the Faculty, either in Princeton or in a foreign university.§ The Board of Education holds in trust "The Newberry Scholarship" which yields about $500 a year and is awarded once in three years for a three years' term, after a competitive examination submitted to by three nominees of one of our Seminaries.

What are parochial schools?

In Scotland a statute was passed in 1696 directing that a school be established in every parish. The Pastor was entrusted with the superintendence and to appoint the teachers, and the Presbytery regulated the hours and

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 460.
† *Ibid.*, p. 502.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 116.
§ *Ibid.*, *1880*, p. 94.

vacations, and could animadvert on the incumbent in all cases of just complaint; and its judgment was final. When the Free Church separated from the Established, it also adopted a similar system of parish schools under the supervision of the Pastors and Presbyteries. In 1844 the O. S. Assembly appointed a committee to consider the expediency of establishing Presbyterian parochial schools. The report was presented the next year, earnestly recommending their general introduction. In 1846 the Assembly resolved that education which does not include instruction in the Scriptures and the doctrines of grace is incomplete; that it approves of churches undertaking schools under their own direction; and that the whole subject of parochial education be commended to the serious attention of the Church and to the Board of Education. In 1847 the Assembly expressed its conviction "that the interests of the Church . . . . demanded that immediate and strenuous exertions should be made, so far as practicable, by every congregation, to establish within its bounds one or more primary schools under the care of the Session of the church, in which, together with the usual branches of secular learning, the truths and duties of our holy religion shall be assiduously inculcated." And Presbyteries and Synods were urged to "devise and execute whatever measures they may deem most appropriate for securing the establishment of parochial and presbyterial schools in our bounds." The Board of Education was called upon to obtain information and grant aid.*

When did the Board of Education give up their parochial schools?

The Board began at once, after the above resolutions

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 406–410. See p. 497.

were passed in 1847, to organize and aid parochial schools, and continued to do so for twenty years. In 1868 the annual report contains a summary of the work, and speaks of an increasing interest. The next year the Board reported the failure of the whole scheme, and mentioned the causes, especially the insuperable practical difficulties. No action was taken by the Assembly in regard to this part of the report. The Board had aided 17 colleges and seminaries, 58 academies and 131 parochial schools. At the reunion in 1870 nothing was said in regard to this part of the Board's work; the whole matter was dropped. In 1871 the sum of $2020 was "applied specially to the closing up of the schools formerly in connection with the Board"*

When was the Board of Education organized?

In 1819 the General Assembly, having been overtured, determined to organize the Board of Education. Its object was stated to be the assisting young men, "giving hopeful evidence of piety and promising talents," "to obtain all parts of an education necessary to their introduction to the pulpit, including both their classical and theological course." A constitution was framed, which afterward received but few modifications. A charter was obtained in 1841, under the direction of the O. S. Assembly.†

What is the American Education Society?

In 1815 a society was formed in Boston which was called "The American Society for Educating Pious Youth for the Gospel Ministry." The name was in 1820 changed into that of "The American Education Society." It was designed to be undenominational. Its supporters and

* *Minutes (O. S.) 1868*, pp. 609, 719; *1869*, p. 976; *1871*, p. 658.

† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 399-403; *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 353.

See p. 329.

beneficiaries have been for the most part connected with the Congregational and Presbyterian churches. In 1818 "the Presbyterian Educational Society at New York" was formed, and in 1827 became a branch of the American Society, as did other similar bodies. In 1831 these branches received a modification of their relation to the parent society, especially the one in New York, which was enlarged in its influence in certain territorial limits, and reassumed its former title, "The Presbyterian Educational Society." It remained for many years as the Presbyterian branch of the American Educational Society.* In 1874 "The Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education" was united organically with the American Educational Society, whose name then became "The American College and Educational Society."†

What was the Western Educational Society?

From 1838 to 1854 the New School branch of the Church co-operated with the American Education and other voluntary societies. In 1852 the General Assembly recommended that in the West, where no such society existed, one should be formed, to be called "the Western Educational Society," whose annual meeting should be at the same time and place as those of the Assembly, and which should permit the members of the Assembly, *ex-officio*, to act as members of the society.‡

What was the Permanent Committee on Education?

At the disruption the New School General Assembly recommended the American Education Society to its Presbyteries and churches, and continued to do so for several years. But in 1852 it was resolved that the

* *Twenty-third Annual Report of the A. E. Society*, pp. 41–59.

† *Fifty-eighth Annual Report of the A. E. Society*, p. 19.

‡ *Presbyterian Reunion Memorial Volume*, p. 69.

Western Educational Society and all others should report every year to the Assembly, as far as their operations should relate to our Church. This led to the formation of the Permanent Committee on Education for the Ministry in 1854. It was located in New York, and its powers and duties were very like those of the O. S. Board of Education. The churches were recommended to sustain this committee, but were left free to "carry forward educational operations within their bounds through their own agencies and local organizations, and to assist their young men directly from their own funds and according to their own rules and regulations, or operate through the Assembly's committee. Arrangements were also to be made with the "Central American Educational Society at New York" and the "Philadelphia Educational Society" for harmonious co-operation. An act of incorporation was obtained in 1858.* In 1861 the plan of the committee was revised.†

What is "the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

At the reunion this Board was formed by a consolidation of the (O. S.) Board of Education and the (N. S.) Permanent Committee on Education. All Presbyteries are expected to see that the churches under their care shall take up an annual collection for this cause. It is located in Philadelphia.†

How are applications for aid to be made to the Board?

(See pp. 330–337.)

What changes in its functions have been proposed?

A special committee on the functions of the Board of Education was appointed in 1877, and was continued

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 351; *New Digest*, pp. 332, 410–423.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 352.

until 1881, when it recommended (1) that this Board be the executive agency of our Church in all that pertains to the training of Candidates to the Ministry, "and the aid, upon proper conditions, of institutions of learning for the purpose, and also for all other educational measures which may from time to time be referred to the Board by the General Assembly;" (2) that a committee be appointed to revise the constitution of the Board, so as to enlarge its functions; (3) that the Board is directed to inaugurate a system for aid of colleges, including "that bequests and other contributions for this purpose be disbursed through the Board," and "that colleges receiving aid give to the Board satisfactory guarantees as to the wisdom of their location, their organization and their administration;" (4) that these funds be kept distinct from those for the aid of Candidates. The report, with these recommendations, was referred to a committee to report to the next Assembly.* To this same committee was referred a report from the Standing Committee of Home Missions, urging the appointment of a Permanent Committee on Education in the West, "to systematize this department of church work, to select the most desirable locations for such institutions of learning, with special reference to the supply of Missionaries and Teachers for the frontier, to devise means for their proper endowment, and to take charge of the funds until they are distributed and invested for the designated objects."* This led to the organization of the Board of Aid for Colleges. See p. 506. In 1897 the Boards of Foreign Missions and Education were directed to confer concerning aid to be given to men preparing to become medical missionaries. The report next year stated that at present it was not needed.†

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, pp. 581–584. † *Ibid.*, *1897*, p. 33; *1898*, p. 44.

What action has been taken in regard to female education?

The O. S. Assembly in 1849 warned parents against sending their children to Romish schools, as dangerous to the children and as a violation of the vows made in baptism.* In 1880 the Assembly resolved, "That in view of the close connection between our homes and congregations and the education of the girls born within our Church, this General Assembly commend to the confidence of our people the educational institutions which do their work in sympathy with the character and aims of our Church. And, further, that Ministers be urged to countenance, and in all fitting ways promote, the efficiency of ladies' schools, where they are needed in addition to our State institutions, in which the highest culture shall be accompanied and leavened by the evangelical faith and worship of our Church."†

Board of Publication.

What early measures were taken by the Church to procure the publication of religious books?

In 1735 the members of Synod were required to submit to a committee for examination and approval whatever they may prepare upon any controversy in religious matters before they shall publish the same. In 1772 a committee was appointed to consider the necessity of procuring religious books for distribution on the frontier and in poor congregations. The Synod ordered a general collection from the churches, a pastoral letter to the congregations, and that a committee be authorized to procure and distribute the following books, not to exceed ten pounds currency each in purchasing them: Bibles, "West-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 856. † *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 71.

minster Confession of Faith," small editions of Vincent's "Catechism," Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion," "A Compassionate Address to the Christian World," Allein's "Alarm to the Unconverted," Dr. Watts's "Divine Songs for Children," and the Assembly's "Catechism." Other books and pamphlets donated, "which they judge will answer the intention of the Synod to promote Christian knowledge," they could also distribute. The next year two committees, one in Philadelphia and the other in New York, were appointed to procure books to give to the poor. In 1803 application was made by the Presbytery of Erie for Bibles and other pious books, to be used as a circulating library "for the spiritual edification of the numerous poor and ignorant persons in that place who are perishing for lack of knowledge." *

How were Bibles procured for distribution?

A committee of three Ministers was appointed in 1783 by the Synod to receive contributions for the purchase of Bibles; and for certain reasons the Synod ordered that the committee shall procure its supply of Bibles only from an American impression executed by Mr. Aitken.† At the first meeting of the General Assembly (1789), Mr. Collins, a printer in the State of New Jersey, proposed to make an impression of the Old and New Testaments, and desired the countenance and support of our Church and of all denominations of Christians. A committee of sixteen was appointed to procure subscriptions. Dr. John Witherspoon, Dr. Samuel S. Smith and Rev. James F. Armstrong were appointed "to concur with such committee as may be appointed, whether from any other denomination or from any other Synod of our denomina-

* *Records of Presbyterian Church*, pp. 117, 428, 429, 441; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 413. † *Records of Presbyterian Church*, p. 500.

tion, to revise and correct the proof-sheets, and, if necessary, to fix upon the most correct edition of the Scriptures to be recommended to the printer from which to make his impression." The suggestion was also made that Osterwald's notes be printed with it, if not inconsistent with the views of the denominations joining in the enterprise.*

When was the first Bible society formed?

As early as 1698 there was in Great Britain a Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, from which sprang others in different parts of the kingdom. These embraced the circulation of the Bible as one of their objects. "The British and Foreign Bible Society" was organized in 1804 with a fund of £700. Its executive committee consisted of fifteen Church-of-England laymen, fifteen dissenters and six foreigners. It at once published an edition of 20,000 Bibles and 5000 Testaments. Auxiliaries were formed at home and on the Continent.†

When was the American Bible Society organized?

In 1808 the Bible Society of Philadelphia was formed. The next year there was organized one in Connecticut and one in Massachusetts. In 1813 one was formed in Halifax, and in 1814 one in Antigua. In 1816 "The American Bible Society" was organized in New York; its receipts the first year were $37,779, and it sent forth 6410 volumes.† The same year the General Assembly recorded its gratification and heartfelt pleasure in hearing "of the formation of the American Bible Society a few days since in the city of New York, and from the unanimity manifested by all denominations of Christians on that occasion, the fervor of zeal displayed and eagerness manifested by the numerous and highly respectable delegation which attended to combine their exertions in

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 415. † *American Cyclopædia.*

promoting the best interest of their fellow-men by furnishing them with the bread of life, they cannot but believe that it is the work of God—that it will stand, and prove a rich blessing to those who may enjoy the fruits of its exertions."*

What is the Authorized Version of the Bible?

It is that which is called "King James's Version," or the version of 1611. The Bible Society is required by its charter to print no other. It is the one authorized to be read in the churches in England and this country. In 1870, at the Convocation of Canterbury, the Anglo-American Revision originated, which is commonly called the "New Version." The plan was started by the Church of England, but soon after the organization of the English Committee an invitation was sent to American scholars to co-operate. A similar committee, of about thirty, was formed here in 1871. Dr. Green of Princeton was made Chairman of the Old-Testament Company, and Ex-President Woolsey of New Haven of the New-Testament Company. The New Testament was approved by the English and American Committees in 1880. It was printed in Oxford and Cambridge, and issued in 1881 simultaneously in England and in this country. The Old Testament appeared in 1885. The Assembly has several times declined to authorize the use of it in our churches.

When was the first Tract Society formed?

The societies in Great Britain, called "Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge," above referred to, had as one of their objects the distribution of "tracts of religion." In 1750 the "Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor" was the first publishing

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 416. † *Companion to the Revised Version.* ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 832.

society composed of different denominations uniting to promote the circulation of religious books and tracts. In 1756 similar societies were formed in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Miss Hannah More in 1795 began the "Cheap Repository Tracts," among which was "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." In 1793 the "Religious Tract Society," or, as it is now called, the "Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland," was established. "The Religious Tract Society of London" was founded in 1799. The first religious publication society in the United States was the "Methodist Book Concern," organized in Philadelphia in 1789; it was afterward moved to New York. Rev. Dr. Jedidiah Morse of Charlestown, Mass., in 1802 published editions of 19 tracts, amounting to 32,806 copies, which were distributed mostly in Maine, Kentucky and Tennessee. The next year the "Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge" was founded by him and others. From this time until 1814 many similar tract societies were formed in the different States.*

When was the American Tract Society organized?

In 1814 the "New England Religious Tract Society" was originated at Andover, by Rev. E. Porter, D. D., and Rev. Justin Edwards, D. D., with some of the Professors of the seminary there. In 1823 its name was changed to "American Tract Society." Its depository was at Andover until 1825, and then transferred to Boston. In the spring of 1825 the "American Tract Society" was organized in New York, with the intention of uniting all local societies as auxiliaries. The one in Boston became a branch of it, selling its plates and publications to it at cost.* This union was interrupted in 1859, but re-established in 1878.

* *American Cyclopædia.*

When did the Presbyterian Church take action on the publication of tracts?

In 1809 the General Assembly recommended that each Synod should establish as many tract societies as might be most convenient, and upon such plans as the Synods might think best.*

What was "the Presbyterian Tract and Sabbath-school Book Society"?

In 1833 the Synod of Philadelphia organized this society, under its supervision, to publish tracts and books for the destitute and for the young, which should inculcate the doctrines taught in our standards.†

What was "the Board of Publication of Tracts and Sabbath-school Books"?

Immediately after the disruption the O. S. Assembly founded this Board, locating it in Philadelphia. This was done because of the evident importance of diffusing sound and scriptural principles, and because it is the duty of the highest judicatory of the Church to superintend and conduct, by its own authority, the work of furnishing suitable publications. The Board was composed of eighty members. To the Executive Committee belonged the duty of selecting and preparing proper tracts and books. Its property was held by the Trustees of the Assembly. And the "Presbyterian Tract and Sabbath-school Book Society" was transferred from the care of the Synod of Philadelphia and merged into this Board, under the care of the Assembly.‡

What was "the Presbyterian Board of Publication"?

In 1839 the "Board of Publication of Tracts and Sabbath-school Books" received some alterations in its con-

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 415. † *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 435.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 433.

stitution. Its name was changed to "the Presbyterian Board of Publication," and it was authorized to publish approved works in support of the great principles of the Reformation, of the doctrine and polity of our Church, and of periodicals teaching sound learning and true religion. In 1841 congregational libraries, composed of the publications of the Board and under the direction of the Session, were recommended. In 1843 the Assembly approved of the establishing of depositories in the different Synods and Presbyteries.* Its property continued under the care of the Trustees of the Assembly until 1847, when a charter was obtained incorporating the "Trustees of the Presbyterian Board of Publication."†

What was the "Doctrinal Tract Committee"?

In 1846 an overture on the subject of doctrinal tracts was brought before the N. S. General Assembly. The subject was referred to a committee, but nothing was done until 1852, when "the Doctrinal Tract Committee" was formed "to superintend the publication of a series of tracts explanatory of the doctrines, government and mission policy of the Presbyterian Church." It was located in Philadelphia. No tract could be published until it was unanimously approved by the committee. This rule was afterward changed, so that only a three-fourths vote was necessary, and still later a mere majority was sufficient. Often the committee is called in the Minutes the "Standing Committee for the Preparation and Publishing of Doctrinal Tracts." Books as well as tracts were prepared by it. All its publications were in 1854 ordered to appear simultaneously in New York and Philadelphia.‡

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 419. † *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 441.
‡ *New Digest*, pp. 394–397.

What was "the Presbyterian Publication Committee"?

In 1855 the name of the Doctrinal Tract Committee was changed to the "Presbyterian Publication Committee." In 1857 it was authorized "to publish not only such works as may present the peculiarities of our branch of the Christian Church in doctrine and practice, but from time to time such works of an evangelical character as may be profitable to the Church at large." This committee was not incorporated. But in 1855 an act was passed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania incorporating "the Trustees of the Presbyterian House," to hold property and secure "some suitable place for the business of the societies and churches connected with the Assembly." These Trustees were authorized, in their corporate capacity as Trustees of the Presbyterian Publication Committee, as fully and in the same manner as if that committee was itself constituted a corporation by the same authority.* The property Nos. 1334 and 1336 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, was purchased, and the houses remodeled for the use above described.

What is "the Presbyterian Board of Publication"?

At the reunion in 1869 it was resolved that the corporate rights of the boards and committees of the two Assemblies should be, as far as practicable, consolidated, and that the (O. S.) Board of Publication and the (N. S.) Presbyterian Publication Committee should be reconstructed as soon as possible; but that in the mean time they should continue to issue their publications until consolidated, and until the new Board could perfect a catalogue for the united Church, so as to exclude invidious references to past controversies.† In 1870 the Presbyterian

* *New Digest*, pp. 398, 400, 404–409; *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 435–437.

† See p. 281.

Board of Publication and the Presbyterian Publication Committee were united under the name of the "Presbyterian Board of Publication." All the members of these old bodies were discontinued, and forty-eight members, in equal numbers from each of the late branches of the Church, were chosen. All the internal arrangements necessary for carrying on the work were left to the decision of the new Board. All the properties belonging to the former Board and Committee were placed in possession of the "Trustees of the Presbyterian Board of Publication," incorporated in 1847, which was made to represent equally both former branches of the Church, by filling vacancies caused by deaths and resignations. The Trustees of the Presbyterian House conveyed to this Board the house and lot Nos. 1334 and 1336 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. This building was to be rebuilt, suited to the wants of the reunited Church. The house No. 821 Chestnut Street, owned by the Board, was ordered to be sold.* In 1885 the obstacles heretofore existing to the merger of the two corporations of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian House having ceased, it was "*Resolved*, That the trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the trustees of the Presbyterian House be authorized and directed to take such necessary action as may be required to effect the union of the two corporations into one, under the corporate title of the former, in accordance with the spirit and terms of the joint report of the two corporations as presented to and approved by the General Assembly of 1874 (Minutes of 1874, pp. 23, 145, 147)."†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 362–366. See p. 447.

† *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 658.

How many departments has the Board?

1. The Publication Department. "This is carried forward upon a capital raised for that special purpose," and is conducted upon strictly business principles, and not only sustains itself by the sale of books and periodicals, but often contributes, from its profits, sums to the other departments of the Board. The character of the books published is determined by the General Assembly.* Special directions have been given, as for the publication of certain books and tracts in foreign languages and for special classes. In 1880 "the Board was enjoined to exercise continued caution and unceasing vigilance, lest at any time its press should send forth publications casting the slightest doubt upon the divine authority and plenary inspiration of the Bible, or upon the divinity and atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, or upon the fact of man's utter ruin by sin, and his absolute need of redemption through the blood shed upon the cross. If the truth must be taught in the form of fiction, at least it must be truth; and, in the judgment of your committee, no book professing to contain religious truth should be published by the Board unless it also contains enough of the gospel to show a child how to be saved."†

In 1882 the Assembly directed that depositories be established at Chicago and St. Louis. This was done, and arrangements for the sale of the Board's books were made with booksellers in New York, Syracuse, Detroit, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati.‡ In view of the peculiar necessities of the churches on the Pacific slope, the Board is recommended to establish a

* See from p. 447. *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 362.

† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 28. ‡ *Ibid.*, *1882*, p. 48; *1883*, p. 613.

new depository in the city of San Francisco."* In 1885 the Board was "directed to establish a depository in the city of New York above Fourteenth Street."† The attention of the Board was called "to the necessity of great care in the establishment of what are termed 'Branch Houses or Representatives,' not multiplying these except when necessity is apparent, and the probabilities of advancing religious ends without militating against the interests of other important agencies, are such as to warrant the extension of the same."†

In 1882 the Assembly required from the Board a clear and definite statement of the expenses and profits of the business department, and in 1884 a committee was appointed to make "a thorough examination of the assets and accounts of the Board of Publication, with instructions to employ an expert accountant, to be paid by the Board, and that the said committee report to the next General Assembly." It was proposed that "such examination be made at least once in two years."‡ The committee reported the next year, and their report was referred to the committee, "with the direction to complete their examination of both departments of the work of the Board of Publication; that six thousand copies of the report, when completed, be printed by the Board; that a copy of the same be sent to each Minister; and that a brief digest of the action of the General Assembly in past years in the whole matter be prepared by the committee and printed in connection with their report."§

2. The Missionary Department. "The department having this work in charge shall be separately consti-

* *Minutes G. A. 1884*, p. 93.
† *Ibid., 1885*, pp. 587, 627.
‡ *Ibid., 1884*, p. 91.
§ *Ibid., 1885*, p. 586.

tuted, and shall keep a distinct account with the Board. It shall be its duty to disseminate the publications of the Board by donations to Ministers and to needy churches, and by sale through its appointees, who shall be called the Missionaries of the Board of Publication, and who shall be appointed subject to the approval, and shall be under the control, of the Presbyteries."* In 1878 the Assembly was asked to consider the desirableness of an organic separation between the missionary and business departments of the Board, and replied: "As these departments are already practically separated and distinct, and as no part of the missionary fund is used in the business department, but, on the contrary, all the expenses of the missionary department are more than paid for by the contributions from the business department; therefore resolved, That it would be unwise to make any change."† This department is sustained by annual contributions from the churches, as ordered by the General Assembly. "All contributions to the missionary fund are used exclusively to carry forward the Board's missionary and Sabbath-school work, in supporting the book, tract and Sabbath-school Missionaries, in paying for the books and tracts given away, and such other expenses as belong legitimately to this benevolent branch of the Board's work."‡

In the organization of the Board at the reunion this necessity was recognized—"the maintenance of a force of colporteurs sufficiently large to reach the outlying population of the land by the gospel, and to prepare the way for the establishment of churches wherever they may be made permanent and effectual." In 1881 the

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 45. † *Ibid., 1878*, p. 29.
‡ *Ibid., 1880*, p. 152.

Assembly appointed a committee of seven "to consider and report to the next Assembly what changes and measures, if any, are needed in order to increase the work and the efficiency of the missionary department of the Board of Publication."* Their report as adopted is in brief—

1. A separation be made as complete as practicable between the publishing and the colportage departments in their business affairs.

2. The publishing department shall assume the support of those offices and agencies only which are of commercial value.

3. An annual report shall state where reduction in prices is practicable, and what sums this department may contribute to the Sabbath-school and missionary work.

4. Colporteurs shall be supervised by the Corresponding Secretary and a committee of the Board, and shall not be sent to a Presbytery without its consent.

5. The office of superintendent of missionary work shall be abolished. District superintendents shall be maintained only for business purposes, and by the publishing department.

6. The contributions from the churches shall sustain the missionary department, including the salary of the secretary of the Sabbath-school work, and of colporteurs, etc., and in part of the Corresponding Secretary.

7. The work of the colporteurs shall be missionary.

Correspondence with Pastors and missionaries shall be encouraged.†

What is the Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work?

In 1886 a committee was appointed to consider the expediency of separating absolutely the Missionary and

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 556. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 367.

Sabbath-school work from the Publishing department of the Board. They reported, next year, that it was not feasible. On their recommendation it was ordered that the Board shall be named "The Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work." It shall have three departments, each under its own superintendent—The Sabbath-school and Missionary, The Editorial, and The Business. The Secretary of the Board shall have general supervisory control, who, with the superintendents of the Sabbath-school and Business departments, shall attend the sessions of the Assembly. It is recommended that two-thirds of the net profits of the Board shall be placed to the credit of the Sabbath-school department. The missionaries shall be carefully chosen, and called the Sabbath-school missionaries of the Board.*

What is colportage?

A system adopted by the Board, by which its publications were carried by colporteurs to the destitute, for gratuitous distribution and for sale.† After the reunion the Standing Committee stated that the system is essential to the efficiency of this Board, and that it ought to be largely increased. The Board was "recommended to prosecute with increased energy the work of distribution by an efficient and economical system of colportage under the direction of the several Presbyteries."‡

The colporteurs are commissioned by the Board, and work under the supervision of the Presbyteries, who are urged, wherever the work is prosecuted, "to give to it prompt and thorough inspection, exercising presbyterial supervision most thoroughly." Any one proving inefficient or unfaithful must be reported to the Board,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 370.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 420. ‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 151.

and his commission at once withdrawn. Their duties consist in visiting from house to house the destitute in a certain district, holding religious conversation in the families, praying with them, and in selling or donating the publications of the Board. In 1874 it was also made their special duty to organize Sabbath-schools in destitute localities and foster those already established. These colporteurs were in 1874 ordered to be called "the Missionaries of the Board of Publication."* In 1882 they were again designated Colporteurs.† In 1881 these Missionaries reported that during the year they had distributed by sale 71,396 volumes, and by gift 25,057 volumes and 4,652,744 pages of tracts. They visited 72,106 families, with most of whom they held religious conversation and prayer.‡ From 1874 to 1880 they visited and aided 8205 Sabbath-schools, and organized 474 new schools in destitute places.§ In 1881 it was resolved that the churches "be expected to give a larger study and affection to the missionary work of the Board." The Board was requested "to consider whether a reduction of the number of the District Superintendents might not be made without impairing the efficiency of the missionary department of the Board;" and a committee was appointed "to consider and report to the next Assembly what changes and measures, if any, are needed in order to increase the work and the efficiency of the missionary department."‖

In regard to the Sabbath-school work, the Board has always paid special attention to the publication of books for the young. In 1871 it was resolved that the Board, so enlarged in the sphere of its operations, keep before it these three branches of the Sabbath-school work:

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, pp. 31, 60. † *Ibid., 1882*, p. 48.
‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 665. § *Ibid., 1880*, p. 151. ‖ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 555

a. "To furnish a complete literature for Sabbath-schools, consisting of its own and other well-selected books for libraries, helps of all kinds for the study of the Scriptures and Catechism, periodicals for teachers and scholars, and all other apparatus fitted to give efficiency to the work of teaching." The Assembly urges the exclusive use of the Bible during the Sabbath-school session.*

b. "To establish such agencies as it may deem suitable for elevating the standard of teaching and more thoroughly developing the great idea of Sabbath-schools —that of imparting the knowledge of God to the young and drawing them to the salvation of Christ."

c. "In appointing colporteurs, as far as possible to select such persons as may also be suitable for Sabbath-school Missionaries, and instruct them to establish Sabbath-schools in destitute localities, under the supervision of the Presbyteries."† In 1874 the Assembly resolved that the missionary department of the Board "shall supervise the whole Sabbath-school work of the Church in connection with the Presbyteries, and it shall aim to lift this important agency of Christian evangelization into the prominence and efficiency which it deserves, and which the great needs of our own country have so largely called for at the present time. And furthermore, in addition to the amount appropriated by the Board from the collections made by the churches, it shall receive and apply donations specifically designated for the Sabbath-school work."† In 1871 the Assembly approved of the appointment by the Board of a general Superintendent of Sabbath-school work. In 1878 Presbyteries were urged "to appoint a committee or pres-

* *Minutes G. A. 1896*, p. 83. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 366.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, pp. 31, 45.

byterial Superintendent, whose duty it shall be to oversee and encourage, as far as may be, the Sabbath-schools in the bounds of the Presbytery, and especially to take order for collecting and transmitting to the General Superintendent the statistics of each school."* In 1880 the Assembly recommended that the Superintendent "be appointed by the General Assembly Secretary of the Sabbath-school work of the Board."† In 1881 the Assembly renewed "the earnest recommendations of former Assemblies as to sessional control of Sabbath-schools, . . . the collection of Sabbath-school statistics, and the use of the periodical Sabbath-school literature of the Board in the family as well as in the school." Sabbath-schools were "requested to aid the Board by the purchase of its books, by the use of its periodicals and by contributions to its missionary fund." And "that the Board be directed to appoint from their own number a Standing Committee of seven to advise and consult with the Secretary of Sabbath-school work."‡ In 1884 the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly was directed to publish in the appendix of the minutes the statistics of our Sabbath-schools for the year as prepared by the secretary of Sabbath-school work.§

What is the Sabbath-school Normal Class?

From the outset, the Superintendent of Sabbath-school work has pressed upon the Church the necessity and importance of the more thorough preparation of teachers for the Sabbath-school. In 1879 he began a normal class, under the auspices of the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, in the assembly-room of the Publication House. It was well attended by Pastors, Superintendents and Teachers. A three years' course of normal-class instruc-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 368. † *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 27.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1881*, p. 555. § *Ibid.*, *1884*, pp. 49, 512; *1885*, p. 627.

tion was prepared, and the subjects announced for the first year. The Assembly approved of this action, and "earnestly recommended the formation of normal classes wherever practicable."* In 1881 the holding of Sabbath-school institutes and conventions and the general organization of normal classes were urged.* The General Assembly in 1883 approved of "the organization of the Bible Correspondence School for the better training of teachers."* In 1897 the methods for teacher's training, Home Department, grading Sabbath-schools and other features of the Board were approved.†

The Board of Foreign Missions.

How early did Protestant churches turn their attention to missions?

At the Reformation the principal work before the Protestant churches was necessarily internal, developing their doctrine, polity and worship. Their external work was principally defending themselves from civil, intellectual and religious attacks, and winning Romanists to the truth. Yet Luther often reminded Christians of "the misery of pagans and Turks," and urged them to send Missionaries to them. Calvin sent fourteen spiritual teachers with a small French colony in 1555 to Brazil, to teach the Reformed religion there. This first Protestant mission was short-lived. In 1664, Ernest von Wels urged the formation of a "Jesus Association" for the propagation of Christianity among the pagans, but he was regarded as a fanatic. Soon after the settlement of New England, John Eliot became deeply interested in the spiritual condition of the Indians, and in 1646 formerly entered upon

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 370. † *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 72.

his mission among them, "with the Mohegan version of the Bible as the fruit of his own unaided labors." This mission continued for many years, and met with wonderful success. Cromwell conceived the plan of uniting all the Protestant churches in the world into one great missionary society, and that the whole earth be divided into four missionary provinces. In 1701 some members of the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge" formed themselves into a committee "for sending Missionaries to the pagans," and took the name of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." It was and is under the control of the Church of England. The "Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge" was formed in 1709, and labored chiefly among the American Indians. But little was really done by the Protestant churches until the close of the eighteenth century, except by the Moravians, whose success was wonderful in the West Indies, Greenland, North and South America.

A new interest in the cause of missions began about 1790, which led to the formation of the "Baptist Missionary Society of England" in 1792, principally through the influence of William Carey, who became the first English Missionary to India. In 1795 the "London Missionary Society" was formed, its members belonging to four different denominations, and twenty-nine young men were sent to its first mission-field, the islands of the Pacific. In 1799 "the Church Missionary Society" was organized. Its management has always been in the hands of the Low-Church party; its Missionaries must subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles and submit to Episcopal ordination. The Methodists organized a missionary society at Leeds in 1814, which soon became very efficient. A

"Scotch Missionary Society" was formed in 1796. But the General Assembly the same year declared the idea of sending Missionaries among the pagans to be folly. This was, however, reversed in 1824, and the Assembly in 1829 sent Dr. Duff, its first Missionary, to India.*

What was done by the American churches?

The condition of the Indians early attracted the attention of the churches planted in this country. The example of John Eliot was followed by many others in different colonies.†

What early efforts were made by the Presbyterian Church?

At the first meeting of the General Presbytery of which we have any record (1707) the missionary character and duty of the Church was recognized. At the first meeting of the Synod (1717) a fund for pious uses was raised; this was yearly continued by collections from the churches. In 1742 a Missionary to the Indians was ordained. The first formal act of the Synod concerning foreign missions was in 1751. "The exigences of the great affair of propagating the gospel among the heathen being represented to the Synod, the Synod, in order to promote so important and valuable a design, do enjoin all their members to appoint a collection in their several congregations once every year, to be applied for that purpose, and that the money raised by such collections be yearly sent to the Synod." The next year this is called "the collection for the Indians." In 1755, "Mr. Gilbert Tennent reported to the Synod that he has lately received a bill for two hundred pounds sterling, generously given for the propagation of the gospel among the Indians, and to be under the direction of this Synod." This money was contributed in Great Britain, and was invested with the Trustees

* *American Cyclopædia.* † See p. 459.

of the New Jersey College, and the interest of it was yearly used to sustain the missions among the Indians. The first Missionary seems to have been Rev. David Brainard, who labored among the Indians in New Jersey. This mission was continued until 1781.*

How were these missions conducted?

They were under the supervision of the Synod, and appropriations were yearly made from the "fund for Indians" and the collections from the churches. The Missionaries were appointed by the Synod. In 1768 a committee of twelve members of Synod was formed and ordered to meet at Elizabethtown, "to draw up and concert a general plan to be laid before this Synod at their next meeting, to be approved by them, in order to prepare the way to propagate the gospel among these benighted people" (the Western Indians). Nothing, however, was done.† When the General Assembly was formed in 1788, missions among the Western Indians were maintained by the Synod of Virginia, and upon the division of that Synod these missions fell to the Synod of Pittsburg. Other missions were conducted by other Synods, as among the Southern Indians by the Synod of the Carolinas. Reports were annually made to the General Assembly by the Synods, who appointed the Missionaries and directed the work through a Committee of Missions and a Board of Trust. The General Assembly ordered its Trustees to make appropriations to these Synods to further the work. In 1806 the Synod of Pittsburg desired the General Assembly to take their missions under its immediate care, but it was not thought expedient to do so at that time. In 1825 these were transferred to the United

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 245, 248, 266, 269.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 380, 391.

Foreign Missionary Society.* In 1791 the following resolution was passed: "Resolved, That the Synod of the Carolinas be allowed so to manage the matter of sending Missionaries to places destitute of the gospel and its ordinances as may appear to that Synod most conducive to the interest of religion within their bounds; provided, that the above Synod send annually to this Assembly a particular account of their proceedings on the above subject, with a regular statement of the money that may be collected and disbursed for the support of the above Missionaries." †

What recent action has been taken in regard to the Indian?

The Assembly of 1880, in reply to overtures, resolved, "That, recognizing the fact that the relations and duties of our country to the Indians have long occupied the serious and careful attention of the United States government, the Assembly express the earnest hope and desire that as rapidly as possible there may be (1) an extension of law over the Indian tribes, giving to them its protection and making them amenable thereto; (2) an individual ownership of land guaranteed to them, and made inalienable for a term of years; (3) the support, by the General Government, of common schools among them; and (4) the securing to the Indians of the enjoyment of full religious liberty." A committee reported in 1882 that the resolutions and a memorial had been presented to the President and the Indian Committee of Congress.‡ In the following year it was "*Resolved*, That Congress be, and hereby is, requested to pass resolutions solemnly pledging the faith of the nation to an Indian policy that shall embody the following principles: That faith shall never

* See p. 467. † *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 329-336, 342.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 74; *1882*, p. 29.

be broken with the Indians; that intruders shall be kept from their territory; that suitable laws shall be enacted for the protection of life and property; that removals of tribes shall be made only where the soil and climate require it and where the change is voluntary; that the Indians shall be educated; that they shall be entitled to hold lands in severalty as fast and as far as they show capacity to cultivate the same; and that the rights and privileges of citizenship shall be given them as soon as they fulfill the appropriate conditions for the exercise of the same."† In 1888 a committee conferred with the President as to an order forbidding the use of the vernacular in the Indian mission schools; the order was modified.§ In 1892 the Assembly judged that public money for the education of Indians should not be expended on sectarian schools.§ The next year the Board was commended for declining Government aid for its Indian schools.‖

In 1883 a committee of five was appointed to investigate the propriety of transferring the mission work among the Indians and Chinese in this country to the Home Board.† They reported finally in 1885, and it was decided that wherever the work was conducted in the Indian language the mission should remain under the Foreign Board, and where English was used the mission should be under the Home Board. The work among the Chinese was left to the Foreign Board, except that the local churches will take care of the representatives of this race within their own bounds.¶ In 1893 the Indian missions were transferred to the Home Board. See page 426.

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 29.
† *Ibid.*, *1883*, p. 674.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1888*, p. 102; *1889*, p. 89.
§ *Ibid.*, *1892*, p. 46.
‖ *Ibid.*, *1893*, p. 115.
¶ *Ibid.*, *1885*, p. 595.

When was "the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" organized?

It was organized in 1810. It was the first missionary society formed in this country. "It owed its origin to a society of students of Andover Theological Seminary, among whom was Adoniram Judson, whose object was to investigate the best ways and means of making the gospel known to pagan nations." It had no denominational basis, but was sustained by the Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed and other churches.* For many years the Presbyterian Church co-operated with it, and as late as 1836 the Assembly declared, "That whatever advantages or disadvantages may have resulted from the division of the Church into numerous denominations with conflicting opinions, it cannot be our duty, as Christians, to perpetuate and extend these divisions by incorporating them in our arrangements to spread the gospel in heathen lands." After the division the New School branch continued to co-operate until the reunion.†

What was "the Standing Committee on Foreign Missions"?

The N. S. Assembly co-operated with the A. B. C. F. M. up to the time of the reunion. But in 1850 the subject of the "erection of Presbyteries in foreign lands" was referred to a committee. No definite action was taken until 1854, it having been found that under the rules of the A. B. C. F. M. it was impracticable to organize Presbyteries and Presbyterian churches on foreign ground. A Standing Committee was formed to correspond with the Prudential Committee of the A. B. C. F. M. and with Presbyterian Missionaries on the subject, and report annually.‡

* *American Cyclopædia.* † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 373

‡ *New Digest*, p. 424.

What was the "Permanent Committee on Foreign Missions"?

The Standing Committee was in 1856 enlarged and called the "Permanent Committee." Its duties were increased by requiring an annual report as to the missionary operations in which Presbyterian churches were engaged, the number of Presbyterian Ministers and Candidates in foreign fields, the amount of collections from churches, and the interest taken by the denomination. In 1859 several overtures urged the Assembly to form a closer connection with its foreign Missionaries, and to form Presbyteries on foreign ground. One reminded the Assembly "that after contributing millions of money we have not a solitary mission church, or but one, in the entire foreign field," and suggested "that a portion of the foreign field be set apart (by the A. B. C. F. M.) to be occupied exclusively by Missionaries of our Church." Another urged direct control of our Missionaries as to their ecclesiastical relations. The Assembly resolved that these overtures demanded consideration and action, and that, while desiring to perpetuate co-operation with the A. B. C. F. M., the Assembly recorded its judgment, as due to the interest of the Church, that the Board should interpose no obstacle in the way of the formation of foreign Presbyteries; that Missionaries should be so appointed as to facilitate the organizing of such Presbyteries; and that there be free correspondence between the Missionaries and the Permanent Committee. The Board professed its desire to further these views, and the Missionaries "in some fields were preparing to perpetuate in foreign countries our excellent Presbyterian polity." The Synod of New York and New Jersey were empowered to form and receive foreign Presbyteries. It was

further resolved that it was inexpedient "to initiate any new and independent foreign missionary undertaking." In 1860 the question was again considered, "whether as a denomination we can continue to work with the American Board, or whether the time has come to initiate a system under which we can more rapidly and fully develop the strength and spirit of our people." The Permanent Committee continued its work until the reunion.*

In 1865 it obtained a charter, by which it was incorporated to hold property for foreign missionary purposes. Its "duty shall be to superintend the whole cause of foreign missions in behalf of the said General Assembly as said General Assembly may from time to time direct, also to receive, take charge of and disburse any property or funds . . . entrusted to said General Assembly or said Permanent Committee for foreign missionary purposes."* Yet the Permanent Committee did not undertake all the work provided for in its charter, but to the last its functions were not to raise and distribute funds or conduct missions, but to supervise the part of the work belonging to the Presbyterian Church, and to report to the Assembly the results.†

What other missionary societies were formed early in the century?

The American Baptist Missionary Union was formed in 1814, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1819, and the Protestant Episcopal Church organized its Board in 1820.‡

What was "the United Foreign Missionary Society"?

The committee which reported in 1816 to the General

* *New Digest*, pp. 425–433; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 350.

† *Presbyterian Reunion Memorial Volume*, p. 92.

‡ *American Cyclopædia.*

Assembly the plan by which the Committee of Missions were erected into the Board of Missions* considered the propriety of directing that Board to undertake foreign as well as home missions, but thought it more desirable that a society be formed, including also the Dutch Reformed, the Associate Reformed and other churches holding the same creed. This suggestion led the next year to the formation of the "United Foreign Missionary Society." The object was "to spread the gospel among the Indians of North America, the inhabitants of Mexico and South America, and in other portions of the heathen and anti-Christian world." It was required to present "annual reports to the highest judicatories of the three denominations." It was located in New York, and the Missionaries were "chosen from the three churches indiscriminately"—"viz., Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed and Associate Reformed." This society continued until 1826, when, according to its request and that of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Assembly consented to the union of the two societies.†

Did the Assembly relinquish the work of foreign missions?

In 1812 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions suggested to the Assembly the expediency of its forming an institution similar to theirs, which might co-operate with them in work among the unevangelized nations. But the Assembly declined to do so, because "the business of foreign missions may probably be best managed under the direction of a single Board;" it was "inconvenient to undertake the work while pressed with the domestic missions, and because missionary societies have been lately instituted in various places

* See p. 418.

† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 337–341.

within our bounds." In 1817, however, it did, with other churches, form the "United Foreign Missionary Society," and sustained it until it was united in 1826 with the American Board.* The subject was considered again in 1828, when the Assembly resolved, "That the Board of Missions already have the power to establish missions, not only among the destitute in our own country, but also among the heathen in any part of the world. . . . It is therefore submitted to the discretion of the Board of Missions to consider whether it is expedient for them to carry into effect the full powers which they possess."† In 1831 an overture on foreign missions was presented, and a committee was appointed to confer with the American Board. The report of this committee was considered the next year, and the Assembly expressed no opinion on its principles, but cordially renewed its recommendation of the American Board to the affections and patronage of the churches.‡

What was the "Western Foreign Missionary Society"?

It was anticipated by some that the committee appointed in 1831 to confer with the American Board would attempt to form a treaty with that Board tending to preclude our Church from engaging in its own capacity in the work. To prevent this, the Synod of Pittsburg in 1831 organized itself into the "Western Foreign Missionary Society." The Assembly hailed with pleasure the interest in foreign missions thus manifested by that Synod. In 1835 the Assembly declared that "it is believed to be among the causes of the frowns of the great Head of the Church which are now resting on our beloved Zion . . . that we have done so little, comparatively noth-

* *New Digest*, p. 347. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 354.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

ing in our *distinctive character* as a Church of Christ, to send the gospel to the heathen, the Jews and the Mohammedans. It is regarded as of vital importance to the welfare of our Church that foreign as well as domestic missions should be more zealously prosecuted and more liberally patronized; and that, as a nucleus of foreign missionary effort and operation, the 'Western Foreign Missionary Society' should receive the countenance, as it appears to us to merit the confidence, of those who cherish an attachment to the doctrines and order of the Church to which we belong." A committee was appointed to confer with the Synod of Pittsburg, and "authorized, if they shall approve of the said transfer" (of the "Western Missionary Society" to the supervision of the Assembly), "to ratify and confirm the same with the said Synod, and report the same to the next General Assembly." In 1836 the committee reported that terms for the transfer had been agreed upon, and the Synod of Pittsburg had ratified them. The proposition to organize a Board of Foreign Missions was defeated by a majority of four, on the ground that the command to preach the gospel to every creature was given "not to the Presbyterian Church in her distinctive ecclesiastic capacity, but to the whole Church, to the collective body of Christ's disciples of every name." In 1837, however, the Assembly did organize a "Board of Foreign Missions," and the Synod immediately transferred to it the missions and property.*

What is the "Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

It was the Board formed in 1837. A vote of 108 to 29 decided "that the General Assembly will superintend and conduct by its own proper authority the work of

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 364–374.

foreign missions of the Presbyterian Church by a Board appointed for that purpose and directly amenable to said Assembly." The Board was composed of eighty members, afterward increased to one hundred and twenty. Its name was "the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." Its Executive Committee consisted of nine members, besides the Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer, and appointed the Missionaries and took the oversight of the work. The property for a time was held by the Trustees of the Assembly. The Board was located in New York, but its first meeting was held in Baltimore.* This Board continued its work until the reunion, sustained by the O. S. churches, and since 1870 it has been the Board of the whole Church. Particular churches and individuals are of course at liberty to contribute to other societies. At the reunion an amicable arrangement was made with the American Board, by which five of its most successful missions, with their forty-three Missionaries and a large number of native Licentiates and Helpers, were transferred to our Board. †

What changes were made in the Board of Foreign Missions at and since the reunion?

The Board shall consist of fifteen members, besides its officers. The number was in 1889 increased to twenty-one. "The Board shall perform the duties heretofore assigned to the Executive Committee of the Board and to the Permanent Committee on Foreign Missions."‡ A field secretary was in 1890 authorized.§ The charter was amended in 1894, providing that the members of the

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 430. † *Minutes G. A. 1871*, p. 534.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 350. § *Minutes G. A. 1890*, p. 59.

Board be elected by the Assembly.* A plan of co-operation with the Southern Church in mission-work was approved in 1893.† Presbyterians are urged to be loyal to our Board, rather than contribute through independent channels. Native irresponsible collectors should be discouraged.‡ The Assembly approved the supporting particular Missionaries by churches and individuals. Missionary candidates should be examined as to their belief that the Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice, their adoption of the Confession of Faith, their approval of the Government and Discipline, and their ability to co-operate with our Missionaries.§

What has the Board to do with education?

The Board is charged also to attend to the education of children and the raising a native ministry. In 1881 it was directed to inform the Presbyterian Alliance of India of our readiness to co-operate in the establishment of a College at Allahabad. In 1889 the Assembly invited other denominations to unite in founding a Protestant college at São Paulo, Brazil, which has since been established by a Board of Trustees under a charter from the University of the State of New York.‖

What is women's work in foreign missions?

(See p. 428.) In 1871 the women's foreign missionary societies raised $7000, and in 1875, $96,000. In that year the Assembly referred to their great efficiency and usefulness, and recommended the formation of societies auxiliary in all our churches. In 1879 the Board of Foreign Missions reported that there were then seven women's Boards auxiliary to it, whose efforts for the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 351. † *Minutes G. A. 1893*, p. 82.
‡ *Ibid., 1897*, p. 65. § *Ibid., 1898*, p. 72. ‖ *Ibid., 1889*, p. 128.

spiritually destitute women in heathen lands have been very fruitful: The Woman's Foreign Mission Society, Philadelphia; Woman's Board of Missions of the North-west; Ladies' Board of Missions of New York; Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, Albany Branch; Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, Troy Branch; Home and Foreign Mission Society, Brooklyn; and Board of Missions of the South-west. These raised during 1898 $312,377.66.* It has become a custom to hold a convention of these and other societies for women's work for women during the session of the General Assembly, in a church in the same city. These are yearly increasing in interest and value.

Board of Church Erection.

What early measures were taken to aid Church Erection?

In 1733 it was overtured "that something be allowed to the congregations of Baskingridge and Perth Amboy, in pursuance of their applications for that purpose, in order to assist them in defraying the charges of their meeting-houses; . . . all which was referred to the Committee of the Fund" for Pious Uses. In 1775 a similar application for aid was received from the congregation at Salem, Mass., to assist in rebuilding their meeting-house, which had been destroyed by fire. This was urged by the Presbytery of Boston. The Synod "recommended them as an object of charity, hoping all persons of ability will contribute to their relief."†

What was the Church Extension Committee?

In 1843 an overture was presented to the O. S. Assembly respecting the erection of churches for feebl

* *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 244.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 421.

congregations. A committee was appointed to consider the matter and report to the next Assembly. It did so, and the Assembly expressed its judgment that suitable houses for worship were necessary, and that each congregation, if able, should erect its own. But as it is the duty of the whole Church to aid feeble churches to sustain a Minister, so is it to assist such churches to build proper houses in which to worship. As this work is so intimately connected with that of the Board of Missions, it was referred, until otherwise ordered, to that Board, who should report annually concerning it. The Board was required to appoint each year a "Committee on Church Extension," composed of five persons, who were to have charge of appropriating moneys received for this purpose, and procure and furnish at cost or gratuitously plans and estimates for buildings, on application. The Board of Missions was required to make rules for the committee in receiving applications, obtaining funds and making appropriations. Collections for the object were ordered to be made yearly in the churches. In 1854 the Assembly ordered the Board to enlarge the Committee of Church Extension, appoint a Secretary for this specific department, bring this important cause more prominently before the churches, and present a separate report of the receipts and disbursements of this fund. In 1855 the Assembly relieved the Board of Missions of this business, and committed it to certain persons, who were required to organize as the Committee of Church Extension, directly subject to the Assembly, and to be located at St. Louis.* Its principles, as declared in its first report, were—appropriations shall be made on recommendation of Presbyteries; the amount shall be

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 422–424.

determined by the necessities of the congregation and the state of the treasury; appropriations shall be granted as widely and equally as possible; a certificate shall be required from the Trustees that the property is secured to the O. S. Presbyterian Church, and that the appropriation will complete the house free of debt; uncalled-for appropriations shall be null after two years; donors shall have the right to designate the church to be aided; and appropriations shall be made payable as soon after a fixed time as the church comply with the conditions.*

What was "the Board of Church Extension"?

In 1860 the Assembly changed the name of the committee above described to the "Board of Church Extension," without making any change in its internal organization or in its relations to the Assembly.† This Board continued its operations until the reunion. But it had no charter or permanent funds, and was therefore free from legal obstacles to a union with the N. S. Trustees of the Church Erection Fund.‡

What was "the Church Erection Committee"?

In 1850 the N. S. Assembly resolved, "That it be recommended to our churches to strive earnestly to render our religious institutions permanent by the erection of church edifices and the settlement of Pastors wherever this can be done; and in this work the older and wealthier churches ought to co-operate with the younger and feebler." In 1853 it was determined to raise a permanent fund of $100,000 to aid feeble congregations in erecting houses of worship. A Church Erection Committee of ten persons was to be annually elected by the Assembly, six of whom should live in New York and

* *Minutes G. A., 1856*, p. 555. † *Ibid., 1860*, pp. 33, 40.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 372.

four in Philadelphia. The meetings were to be held alternately in these cities. The fund was confided to the Treasurer of the Assembly, subject to the order of the committee, but no appropriation could be granted until the whole sum of $100,000 be raised. Reports were to be made to the Assembly of the relative needs of each Synod, of the condition of the fund, and proposing a proportionment of the same. The Assembly were to determine the amount to which each Synod would be entitled for the next year. This amount might be drawn by the Synod for loans or donations to the churches. Each loan must be definitely agreed upon, and security in bond and mortgage or personal notes obtained satisfactory to the committee. Donations might be made, and loans remitted in cases of need, to one-fourth the amount apportioned to the Synod. But all moneys must be secured on the house, in case of a change in the ecclesiastical relations of the church. Each church receiving aid must take an annual collection for the Church Erection Committee. No interest was demanded on loans until the principal became due.*

What was "The Trustees of the Church Erection Fund of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

In 1854 the N. S. Assembly resolved to form a Board of Trustees, so named, to consist of nine persons, of whom four shall be Ministers, and five Elders of churches under the care of this Assembly; these Elders shall be residents in New York. The Board shall be located in that city, and make annual reports to the Assembly. A charter was obtained to enable the Trustees to hold and administer the fund. The

* *New Digest*, pp. 375–378.

duties assigned to the Church Erection Committee were transferred to this Board of Trustees, which was to perform them through Committees on Church Erection in the several Synods. Each application for aid shall be written and full, and made first to these synodical committees. If approved, it shall be endorsed by the committee and sent to the Board of Trustees, which, on receiving the necessary papers, legally approved, may grant the amount thus secured. No loan or donation shall be made except to an organized church and on a building otherwise free from incumbrance, and in payment of debts contracted within a year. The loan could not exceed one-third the value of property, nor more than $500. A donation shall not be more than $200, nor exceed one-fourth the value of property. All loans shall be made on the following conditions: (1) The principal shall be returned in four equal annual installments. the first to be due in three years from date of loan; (2) if the installments are punctually paid, no interest will be required; (3) in default of any payment interest shall be required on the whole unpaid loan; (4) if the church withdraw from the General Assembly, the whole amount unpaid shall at once become due. Security shall be given by mortgage of the property, which shall be kept insured. In 1855, the Board being fully organized and incorporated, the Church Erection Fund was transferred to it by the Treasurer of the Assembly. The whole amount, $100,000, was completed in 1856, and appropriations were then made.* In 1866 the above plan was so changed that the system of loans to churches was abandoned, and the fund was invested, and the interest thereon, with the collections from the churches, was used in

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 374–378.

making absolute donations to feeble congregations, secured by mortgage and insurance as before. These donations shall not exceed one-third the amount contributed, and secured by mortgage on the house and lot. The Permanent Fund retained that name, and moneys received from collections and other sources were called "the Supplementary Fund." Applications for aid shall be first made to the Church Erection Committee of Presbytery, instead of to that of the Synod.*

What is "the Board of the Church Erection Fund of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America?"

At the reunion the (O. S.) "Board of Church Extension" and the (N. S.) "Trustees of the Church Erection Fund" were united, retaining the name and charter of the Trustees of the "Church Erection Fund." The Board (consisting of twenty-one persons) was chosen impartially from both branches of the Church. Of the Trustees, seven Ministers and eight laymen resided in or near New York, and three Ministers and three laymen in the West. The Board was located in New York, and called "the Board of the Church Erection Fund of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."* In 1879 the Board overtured "that, in view of the importance of establishing schools and building chapels in Utah, New Mexico and Alaska, the plan governing the Board may be amended so that the Supplementary Fund may be made available for the building of chapels as well as of churches, and also for authority to effect such a change in the character of the said Board as shall enable them to engage in the work of chapel-building."† This was secured. In 1885

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 375. † *Ibid.*, p. 376.

the Board was directed to ask that the clause might read: "The Board of Church Erection may assist in the erection of chapels among the exceptional populations of Mormons, Indians and Spanish-speaking peoples." * This was interpreted in 1893 as authorizing the erection of school-houses for such classes.† Grants must in all cases leave the church free of debt, except when it is the first in a new community and a lot has been mortgaged to the Board. Installments to one-fourth of the grant may then from time to time be granted, not exceeding one-half the value of the lot nor of the collections for building.‡ A church annually returning at least 10 per cent. of the grant may request that such payments be installments on the mortgage.§ Grants may be made to churches on leasehold property.‖ In 1892 a new department was established, "The Loan Fund," which cannot be used for current expenses. Loans are granted at six per cent. to the churches promising life and strength, to erect churches costing less than $10,000. The loan shall not ordinarily exceed $5000, or one-half the value of the lot and edifice. The property must be held according to the rules of the Board. The loans shall ordinarily be returned within ten years in annual payments. If the interest and installments are promptly paid, a rebate of one-half the annual interest may be allowed. Applications must be endorsed by Presbytery. In case of default in payments the Presbytery shall co-operate with the Board in enforcing such payments, and loans may be withheld from other churches of the Presbytery where previous loans or interest is more than a year overdue.‖

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 383. † *Minutes G. A. 1893*, p. 108.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 378. § *Ibid.*, p. 379.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

Grants from the general fund should be regarded as loans without interest, to be repaid, when practicable, in annual payments, to be credited to the church as annual contributions.* The stronger Synods are urged to contribute more than they ask from the Board. Special contributions to particular churches should be sent through the Board.† The action of the Board in declining, in ordinary cases, to aid any church to the amount of more than $1000 to build expensive churches was approved.‡ In 1873 the Manse Fund was transferred to this Board. See pages 512–515.

Board of Relief.

What were the early efforts of our Church to relieve disabled Ministers and widows?

The Synod of Philadelphia, in 1719 and 1725, made appropriations, to the widow of Rev. John Wilson, from the fund for pious uses, and in 1733 to Rev. J. Andrew.§

What was the Widows' Fund?

In 1755 the Synod proposed that each Minister pay annually two or three pounds. From the fund thus raised shall be paid five or seven pounds annually to the widow of each deceased Minister, as he had paid two or three pounds. Should the widow remarry, she shall receive one-third of the annuity, and the two-thirds shall be divided among the children of the deceased Minister for twelve years as the company may determine. If there be no children, and the widow marry, she shall receive only one-half the amount through the rest of her life. If any member become disabled, he shall be entitled to like annuities during his disability. The fund was further to be increased by annual collections in the churches. Thirty-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 385. † *Minutes G. A. 1894*, p. 118.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 383. § *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 58, 80, 105.

seven pounds were subscribed on the first day. This was called "the Widows' Fund." Five annual payments must be made by the Minister before the annuity could be available. If a Minister should die before these are made, one-half of the annuity shall be paid to the widow until the amount be completed. A charter was obtained in 1759 with the corporate name of "The Corporation for Relief of Poor and Distressed Presbyterian Ministers, and of the Poor and Distressed Widows and Children of Presbyterian Ministers." Its capital stock could not exceed one thousand pounds for each twenty Ministers.* The corporation still continues, and is the oldest life insurance company in the United States. The company construes the term "Presbyterian Ministers" as including Presbyterians, Reformed Presbyterians, United Presbyterians, Cumberland Presbyterians, the Reformed Dutch and German Reformed denominations and any other of like polity. It was understood to include also the laymen of these denominations. This has been secured by amendments. Its present name is "The Presbyterian Annuity and Life Insurance Company," and it is located in Philadelphia. "In its entire history it seems to have some intimate relation to the Synod by whose agency or advice it was brought into existence, and also to subsequent General Assemblies, and that the interest or relation was preserved for a number of years, and so long as the sessions of the Assembly continued to be held in Philadelphia." In 1876 it petitioned the Assembly to be recognized, and that annual reports might be presented. But the Assembly declined to undertake such supervision and endorsement, as foreign to the powers belonging to the Assembly.†

* *Records Pres. Church*, pp. 215–217, 222, 296, 309. † *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 472–477; *Minutes G. A. 1876*, pp. 72, 73; *1881*, pp. 524, 550.

What other plan was proposed for the relief of disabled Ministers?

In 1794 the following plan was sent down to the Presbyteries: (1) Each Minister receiving a salary of eighty pounds shall contribute annually thirty shillings to a common stock. (2) The fund shall be applied to the relief of Presbyterian Ministers and their families. (3) Each Presbytery shall annually report a list of its invalid Ministers and needy families of Ministers, with recommendations for aid. (4) Yearly collections shall be made. (5) All Ministers in connection with the Assembly may be aided. The Presbyteries, however, while approving the object, regarded "the plan as inexpedient and improper to be adopted."*

What was the "Fund for Disabled Ministers and their Families"?

In 1849 the O. S. Assembly determined to constitute a fund for the support of the families of deceased Ministers and for the relief of aged and disabled Ministers, by annual contributions from the churches; that the fund be placed under the care of the Board of Trustees of the Assembly, to be disbursed by the Board of Publication upon recommendation of the Presbyteries; and that a permanent fund be founded by special contributions and legacies. In 1852 the duty of disbursing this fund was transferred to the Board of Trustees of the General Assembly. The plan adopted in 1849 was endorsed by several Assemblies, especially in 1856, when a report was read from a committee appointed the previous year to consider if any changes were advisable.* In 1861 means were offered from private sources to sustain the Chairman and Secretary of the committee on the fund,

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 478.

that he might give the whole of his time to the cause. This proved a great blessing—so much so that notwithstanding forty-six Presbyteries withdrew their support in consequence of the civil war, the contributions to the fund increased. The Assembly directed the attention of the Church to the advisability of adding constantly to the Permanent Fund. At the time of the reunion the Permanent Fund amounted to $24,000, and the contributions from the churches to $32,772.*

What plan was "the Ministerial Relief Fund"?

In 1861 the N. S. Assembly appointed a committee on the subject of raising a fund to aid disabled Ministers and their families. In 1864 it was resolved that a fund be raised by annual collections, donations and legacies, to be called "the Ministerial Relief Fund," "for the relief of disabled Ministers of good and regular standing in connection with this body, and the families of Ministers who have deceased while in our connection." This fund was confided to the Trustees of the Presbyterian House, to be disbursed on recommendations of the Presbyteries, according to such rules as they may deem equal and beneficial. The Trustees were empowered to appoint a Secretary and prescribe his duties. Every Presbytery was directed to appoint a Standing Committee to inquire into cases of need, and report them with recommendation to the Executive Committee of the Relief Fund.†

What was "the Relief Fund for Disabled Ministers and the Widows and Orphans of Deceased Ministers"?

The joint committee appointed to consider the affairs of the O. S. "Fund for Disabled Ministers and

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 387; *Minutes G. A. 1863*, p. 102; *1869*, p. 986.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 388.

their Families," and of the N. S. "Ministerial Relief Fund," reported the following, which was adopted: The fund shall be called "The Relief Fund for Disabled Ministers and the Widows and Orphans of Deceased Ministers." The Trustees of the Assembly shall annually elect a Secretary, a Treasurer, and four of their members to be a committee to take charge of this fund. All appropriations shall be made on the recommendation of the Presbytery, and made from year to year. The applications must give full information. The responsibility of the recommendations belongs to the Presbyteries, yet the committee has the right to appropriate according to the merits of each case and the state of the treasury.*

What is the "Presbyterian Board of Relief for Disabled Ministers and the Widows and Orphans of Deceased Ministers"?

In 1874 the Assembly appointed a committee of seven to inquire into the expediency of raising the Committee on Ministerial Relief to the position of a Board, and to report how its efficiency may be increased. A report was presented the next year, but referred to the Assembly of 1876, when the proposed change was ordered, and thus the agency was brought into direct contact with the Assembly and liability to loss avoided. The Board met and organized in Philadelphia June 20, 1876, and obtained a charter the same year. The Board consists of twelve persons besides the Secretary and the Treasurer.†

Appropriations are not to be made to Ministers unless disabled, nor to those who for years have abandoned the ministry, nor a widow with children able to support her, nor a widow having married a beneficiary of the Board, nor a widow who marries outside the Ministry.

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886,* p. 450. † *Ibid.*, p. 389.

Orphans of Ministers and those of lay missionaries, too young to earn their support, and in some cases orphans who are chronic invalids, are to receive aid under the same rules as other beneficiaries.* In 1884 the Board was informed that only those connected with our church were entitled to aid.† Women after five years of service under the Foreign or Home Board may receive aid, also lay missionaries under similar circumstances.* Ministers in union Presbyteries (see page 184) do not lose their claim on this Board. A Minister over seventy years, and who has served the Church for thirty years, may, without annual recommendations, receive three hundred dollars per annum for the rest of his life. His application must be endorsed by him as to his fields of labor and the time of service in each, and be approved by Presbytery.* The Assembly in 1894 extended these privileges to women missionaries and Ministers of the Board of Freedmen.*

What is the Home for Presbyterian Ministers?

Dr. Alexander M. Bruen donated to the Board of Ministerial Relief the mansion and grounds of the Bruen estate at Perth Amboy, N. J., "as a home for disabled Ministers and the widows and orphans of deceased Ministers of the Presbyterian Church." Application for admission must be made to the Presbyterial Committee on this Board, and be approved by the Board.‡ The next year it was recommended that a library be founded, and the Board of Publication was authorized to present its publications at its discretion. The "John C. Mercer Home for Disabled Clergymen of the Presbyterian Faith," who

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 391, 392.

† *Minutes G. A. 1884*, p. 48.

‡ *Ibid., 1883*, p. 592.

do not use tobacco in any form, is beautifully situated near Philadelphia, and is furnished with every comfort.*

What other methods have been considered?

In 1882 a committee was appointed (1) "to devise some plan . . . . to secure a sum by which, under the approval of his Presbytery, at least $300 shall be given to each Minister who is either disabled from preaching or honorably retired;" (2) "to devise some plan by which a widows' and orphans' fund shall be created from which to secure some support to the families of deceased Ministers."† In 1884 to this committee were referred an overture on ministerial support on the basis of an equal dividend from a general fund, and the subject of Ministerial life insurance.‡

Board of Missions for Freedmen.

What early action was taken as to the colored race?

In 1774 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia received a request to send two natives of Africa as Missionaries to that land; this was granted. The discussion introduced the subject of negro slavery, but no action was taken until 1787. The Synod then declared that our people should "use the most prudent measures, consistent with the interest and the state of civil society in the counties where they live, to procure eventually the final abolition of slavery in America;" and that to this end those persons now held in servitude should receive a good education to prepare them for freedom, and that opportunity and sufficient means be granted them of procuring their own liberty.§ In 1800 the Assembly, in system-

* *Minutes G. A. 1894*, p. 77.

† *Ibid.*, *1882*, p. 83; *1883*, p. 619. ‡ *Ibid.*, *1884*, pp. 49, 50.

§ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 456, 458, 540.

atizing its missionary work, specified four objects demanding attention; one of which was "the instruction of the negroes, the poor and those who are destitute of the means of grace in various parts of this extensive country."* The temporal and spiritual condition of the slaves was constantly considered by the Assembly, and the decision of the Synod in 1787 was frequently reiterated and amplified, as in 1815, when the Assembly declared that it considered "the buying and selling of slaves by way of traffic, and all undue severity in the management of them, as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel," and Presbyteries and Sessions were enjoined "to make use of all prudent measures to prevent such shameful and unrighteous conduct." And in 1818 the Assembly unanimously resolved, "That we consider the voluntary enslaving of one portion of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature, as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, . . . and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ." "We rejoice that the Church to which we belong commenced as early as any other in this country the good work of endeavoring to put an end to slavery." To accomplish this, the Assembly recommended all our people to patronize and encourage the American Colonization Society, which had been organized in 1816, and that all the members of our Church "facilitate the instruction of the slaves in the principles and duties of the Christian religion."† One object specified in the subscription-paper for the Assembly's permanent missionary fund (1800) was "the instruction of the black people;" and in 1801, John Chavis, a black man of

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 312. † *Ibid.*, pp. 817–822.

prudence and piety, a Licentiate of the Presbytery of Lexington, was commissioned by the Assembly as a Missionary among people of his own color. In 1807 John Gloucester, a black man, was licensed and commissioned to the same work. Ten years later he appears in the Assembly as a member from the Presbytery of Philadelphia.*

What action did the O. S. Assembly take?

The question whether the holding of slaves is, under all circumstances, a heinous sin, agitated all branches of the Christian Church. In 1845 the O. S. Assembly said that "since Christ and his inspired Apostles did not make the holding of slaves a bar to communion, we as a court of Christ have no authority to do so; since they did not attempt to remove it from the Church by legislation, we have no authority to legislate on the subject." As the "Apostles sought to ameliorate the condition of the slaves . . . . by teaching both masters and slaves the glorious doctrines of the gospel, and enjoining upon each the discharge of their relative duties, thus only can the Church of Christ, as such, now improve the condition of the slaves in our country." The next year the Assembly said: "Our Church has, from time to time, during a period of nearly sixty years, expressed its views on the subject of slavery. During all this period it has held and uttered substantially the same sentiments;" and "that in the judgment of this house the action of the General Assembly of 1845 was not intended to deny or rescind the testimony often uttered by the General Assembly previous to that date." The subject was introduced in 1849 and in 1850 by overtures, but the question was regarded as settled.† In 1863 the actions of

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 826. † *Ibid.*, pp. 823–825.

1818 and 1845 were again declared as a satisfactory and full expression of the opinion of the Church.* After the Emancipation Proclamation the Assembly (in 1864) gave an important deliverance, in which the unequivocal and consistent testimonies of the Church on this subject were reiterated, and the abiding principles thus expressed recognized. The Assembly expressed its gratitude that God had overruled the wickedness of the rebellion to deliver our country from the evil and guilt of slavery, and its desire that this root of bitterness might be entirely extirpated.†

In 1825 and 1839 the Assembly expressed pleasure at the growing attention of the Church to the religious instruction of slaves, and declared that the success of such teaching marked an era in the work of domestic missions. In 1847 the interest manifested in the religious instruction of the colored population was recognized as greatly increasing. The work was continued year after year with growing zeal and success. The Boards of Domestic Missions and Education were heartily engaged.‡

What was "the Ashmun Institute"?

In 1853 the Assembly, in answer to a memorial from the Presbytery of New Castle, resolved, "That the establishment of a high school for the use and benefit of the free colored population of this country meets the cordial approbation and recommendation of this Assembly, with the understanding that it shall be wholly under the supervision and control of the Presbytery or Synod within whose bounds it may be located, thus securing such an education as shall promote the usefulness and happiness of this class of our people."§ It was located

* *Minutes G. A. (O. S.) 1863*, p. 55.
† *Ibid., 1864*, pp. 296–299.
‡ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 827, 828.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 829. See p. 341.

near Oxford, Pa., and called "the Ashmun Institute," in commemoration of Jehudi Ashmun, an agent of the American Colonization Society, who in 1822 reinforced the colony of Liberia. He found it disorganized and in 1828 left it prosperous.* The Assembly frequently recommended this institution to the churches. In 1859 it sent out three Missionaries to Africa.†

What is "Lincoln University"?

In 1866 by an amendment of charter, Ashmun Institute became "Lincoln University." In 1871 its Theological Department was placed under the care of the G. Assembly, which received a veto power in the election of the Theological Professors. In 1897 the charter was again amended, that property and funds hereafter acquired for Theological instruction shall be held in trust for the Presbyterian Church and that the Assembly have power to enforce and protect the trust.‡ The same year the Assembly expressed deep sympathy in the University and especially in its Theological Department and commended the University to the churches for the liberal support of the whole work and the separate endowment of its Theological Department.§

What is the "Biddle University"?

The Presbytery of Catawba in 1867 appointed Rev. S. C. Alexander to establish a theological class at Charlotte, N. C., for the training of freedmen as Catechists and Ministers. Mrs. H. J. Biddle of Philadelphia furnished the means for the buildings as a memorial to her husband. It was called "The Biddle Memorial Institute." The theological department was taken in 1875 under care of the Assembly. In 1876 it was chartered as "Biddle

* *American Cyclopœdia.* † *Minutes G. A. (O. S.) 1859*, p. 524.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 519. § *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 104.

University."* It has three departments. Industrial education is given in the Normal and Preparatory schools.†

What were "the General Assembly's Committees for the Education of Freedmen"?

In examining the report of the Board of Education to the O. S. Assembly in 1864, attention was called to "the large number of the African race, known as 'freedmen,'" being in great moral and intellectual destitution. The whole subject was referred to a committee, who reported the following plan for the religious instruction of the freedmen; which was adopted. The work was evidently of such magnitude that it could not be conducted by the Board of Education. "The Presbyterian Church must be true to its historic doctrine and faith; that the hope of the African race, under God, is in Christian education;" and that God is by his providence calling upon our Church to do what it can for the elevation and salvation of this downtrodden and long-abused people. It was resolved that two committees be appointed, of two Ministers and three laymen each, one in Philadelphia and one in Indianapolis, to be called "the General Assembly's Committees for the Education of Freedmen." These shall co-operate, having oversight of the work, appointing Teachers and Ministers, upon the endorsement of Presbyteries, but not interfering with the Board of Domestic Missions, establishing schools, determining the books, etc. to be used, and obtaining funds for the work. These committees were to report directly to the Assembly. And the Board of Publication was directed to furnish, gratis, at its discretion, such of its publications as may be used for the evangelization of the freedmen.†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 520. See p. 342.

† *Minutes G. A. 1864*, pp. 274, 321–323.

What was "the General Assembly's Committee on Freed men"?

To increase the efficiency of this new temporary agency, the O. S. Assembly determined in 1865 to substitute one committee for the two appointed the previous year. It was located at Pittsburg, and consisted of nine Ministers and nine laymen. It received similar powers to those granted to the two committees, and was ordered to transfer, as soon as possible, to the Boards of the Church, such parts of their work as may belong to the specific objects of these several Boards. The next year, because of the magnitude and importance of the work, six members were added to the committee, which was empowered to conduct its business by an Executive Committee. At the time of the reunion this committee had organized 72 churches, had under its care 5634 communicants, had gathered 4723 children in Sabbath-schools and over 3000 in day-schools. It had three institutes in the Southern States preparing Teachers and Ministers, and held property worth $66,680.*

What action did the N. S. Assembly take?

The N. S. Assembly in 1839 referred the subject of slavery to the lower judicatories, to take such action as they might deem most judicious and adapted to remove the evil. No other action was taken until 1846, when the Assembly said that "while we feel bound to bear our testimony against slavery, and to exhort our beloved brethren to remove it from them as speedily as possible by all appropriate and available means, . . . yet as a court of our Lord Jesus Christ we possess no legislative authority, and as the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church

* *Minutes G. A. (O. S.) 1865*, p. 543; *1866*, p. 77; *1869*, p. 939.

we possess no judicial power." "We must therefore leave this matter with the Sessions and Presbyteries and Synods, . . . to act in the administration of discipline as they may judge it to be their duty, constitutionally subject to the General Assembly only in the way of general review and control." In 1849 nineteen documents on the subject of slavery were presented, and the Assembly reiterated the actions of 1818 and 1846, as including the following principles: (1) Civil liberty is man's right. (2) Slavery "is intrinsically an unrighteous and oppressive system," and injurious to all concerned in it. (3) It is the duty of all Christians "as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery." (4) Where it cannot be removed at once, direct religious instruction and practical knowledge of life should be given to prepare the slave for emancipation. (5) Traffic in slaves, undue severity and breaking up families should be corrected by church discipline. In 1850 the holding of slaves, except where it is unavoidable by State laws, was declared to be an offence subject to discipline. In 1853 the Assembly required the Presbyteries to report the next year (1) the number of slaveholders in connection with the churches, and the number of their slaves; (2) how far these slaves are held by unavoidable necessity; (3) are the Southern churches showing a practical regard to the religious well-being of the slaves? In 1855 a pastoral letter to all the churches was sent, reaffirming the former deliverances, and a committee was appointed to report to the next Assembly on the constitutional authority of the Assembly over the subject of slaveholding in our churches. This committee reported in 1856 that the Assembly "has no power to commence a process of dis-

cipline with an individual offender," and that "in the way of general review and control it can reach directly only the judicatory next below; that is, the Synod." Besides, the Assembly has "the testifying and reproving function so often exercised in time past." The next year the Assembly rehearsed its former deliverances, and expressed grief at the discovery that a portion of the Church at the South had put forth a new doctrine, that slavery was an ordinance of God, and as existing in this country was both right and scriptural. This was declared to be at war with the whole spirit of the gospel and abhorrent to the conscience of the Christian world. The Presbytery of Lexington, South, was called upon to review and rectify their position, as "such doctrines and practice cannot be permanently tolerated in the Presbyterian Church." Against this action a solemn protest was offered and placed on the minutes. The signers declared the action of the Assembly to be a virtual exscinding of the South, the exercise of usurped power, destructive of the unity of the Church, hurtful to North and South, and imperiling the union of these United States. The answer to this protest is recorded. When the Assembly met the next year, six Southern Synods were not represented, they having organized in the mean while "the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church."*

What was "the Freedmen's Department of the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions"?

This department was organized in 1865, and the work committed to it and its mode of operation were very similar to those confided by the O. S. Assembly to its Committees on Freedmen.† At the time of reunion it had

* *New Digest*, pp. 275–295, 564–568. See p. 287.

† See p. 491.

13 Missionaries and 185 teachers, 93 schools and about 4000 pupils.*

What was "the Presbyterian Committee of Missions for Freedmen"?

At the reunion the Assembly's Committee on Freedmen and the Freedmen's Department of the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions continued their work until the reorganization was completed. It was determined that the whole work of our Church for the religious and educational interest of the colored race in this country be conducted by a committee of twelve persons, located in Pittsburg, to be known as the "Presbyterian Committee of Missions for Freedmen." To it were transferred all documents, moneys and properties previously held by the Committee on Freedmen and the Freedmen's Department. The Boards of the Church were recommended to co-operate with it in conducting its work. The committee was recommended to look for a supply of competent colored Ministers and Teachers for the institutions established by our Church, and the necessity of providing schools in which females may enjoy similar advantages was urged upon the attention of the committee.† In 1874 the Assembly ordered that this committee "shall continue as at present located and constituted for the period of five years, during which period its affairs shall be conducted with a view to the final merging of the committee with the Board of Home Missions, and as soon as possible the churches under the care of the committee shall be transferred to the Board."‡ In 1878 it was found that some interpreted this act as ordering the transfer to the Board of Home

* *Minutes G. A. 1870*, p. 104. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 393.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 44.

Missions of the work of the committee, which should then be dissolved; and others understood it as requiring only the transfer of mission churches to the Board, while the committee should continue to supervise the educational work in all its details. In January the committee had transferred to the Board 80 churches, 27 Ministers and 2 Catechists, and retained under their care 56 churches, 22 Ministers and 25 Catechists, and the entire work of evangelical education. The Assembly considered the two views above mentioned, the condition of the work, and overtures from one Synod and two Presbyteries in the Southern States pleading for the continuance of the committee, and determined "that the work as at present carried on by the Presbyterian Committee of Missions for Freedmen be continued," and that it be earnestly commended to the prayers and liberality of the churches.* The next year the question was again considered, and the Assembly refused by a large vote to transfer the work to the Board of Home Missions and discontinue the committee, declaring that the reasons which actuated the Assembly in 1878 were still cogent, and the work too important to be jeopardized by an experiment.†

What schools were under the care of this committee?

I. *Chartered Institutions:*

Biddle University, Charlotte, N. C.‡

Wallingford Academy, Charleston, S. C.‡

Scotia Seminary, Concord, N. C. Its design is "to educate colored girls in religion and in the arts and sciences usually taught in seminaries of a high order, and in those domestic duties which belong to the highest

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, pp. 74–81. † *Ibid., 1879*, pp. 592, 597.

‡ See p. 490.

type of wife, mother and teacher." Its location was chosen by the Freedmen's Committee. Its funds were contributed chiefly by Mr. Matthew Scott of Ohio. It has accommodations for thirty-two boarders, and receives a large number of day-scholars.*

II. *Normal Schools.* From the first the committee have paid special attention to the training of the freedmen to be teachers to their own race. The pupils in the schools, when prepared, were employed during their vacations in teaching in Sabbath- and day-schools. This idea has gradually received more attention. Certain schools were designated as training-schools. These were afterward called "normal schools."†

Brainerd Institute, Chester, S. C., organized in 1869.

Fairfield Normal School, Winnsboro', S. C., for boys and girls, organized in 1869.

Bluffton Institute, S. C., organized in 1878.‡

III. *Graded Schools:*

Medway Graded School, in Liberty co., Ga., organized in 1874.

Greensboro' Graded School, Greensboro', N. C., organized in 1868 as a parochial school, but in 1874 made a graded school, with white and colored departments.

Graded School, Columbia, Tenn., organized in 1866.§

IV. *Common Parochial Schools.* These are schools under the supervision of the Sessions of particular churches, aided by the committee. They teach the ordinary branches, preparing pupils for the graded schools.

While these schools were intended primarily for the freedmen, they were open to the white as well as col-

* *Minutes G. A. 1872*, p. 159.

† *Ibid.*, *1874*, p. 154; *1880*, p. 165. ‡ *Ibid.*, *1878*, p. 201.

§ *Ibid.*, *1878*, p. 201. ‖ *Ibid.*, *1878*, p. 73; *1881*, p. 524.

ored people. "The whole system of church and school, as considered by the Committee, knows no exclusion of persons on account of color."*

In 1881 the Assembly endorsed "the effort to secure the erection of a building at Franklinton, N. C., for the use of the State Normal School, provided . . . the title to the property secured be vested in the Trustees of the Assembly." It is now "The Albion Academy" under the care of the Freedmen's Board.†

What is the Board of Missions for Freedmen?

In 1882 the Committee of Missions for Freedmen was incorporated as a Board.‡ It was ordered to trace the titles of properties held and to keep abstracts of them in the office. These were found satisfactory and the Board held over $100,000 insurance on the buildings.§ In 1889 it was ordered that the Board have the entire charge of the work, and shall confer at least once a year with the Home Board, and shall give special attention to the establishment of industrial schools. The establishment of a permanent fund was approved.‖ In 1893 a Committee was appointed to confer with a similar one from the Southern Church on colored evangelization. A plan of co-operation through this Board was proposed but was rejected by the Southern Assembly, and therefore no action was taken by our church.¶ In 1896 the Assembly refused to change the name of the Board to "The Board for Colored Missions."** The Board has (in 1898) under its care Biddle University, 26 seminaries and academies and

* *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 41. † *Ibid., 1881*, p. 526; *1898*, p. 278.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 394. § *Minutes G. A. 1884*, p. 81.
‖ *Ibid., 1889*, pp. 24, 61; *1890*, p. 116.
¶ *Ibid., 1893*, p. 125; *1894*, p. 129. ** *Ibid., 1896*, p. 155.

80 parochial schools with 8,045 pupils, and 276 Sabbath-schools with 18,221 scholars.*

What is the relation of this Board to the Presbyteries?

(1) Appropriations to churches are made on recommendation of the Presbyteries. The Board may refuse or modify these, giving written reasons to the Presbyteries. (2) Presbytery is final judge as to organization of churches and character of Ministers. (3) The Board, considering the wishes of Presbyteries, must decide what schools to maintain.†

What is the Woman's Department for Freedmen?

This was organized in 1885 to interest the women in the women and children of freedmen, and to employ women to visit and teach them.‡

Sustentation Fund.

What was the origin of this scheme?

In 1870 the Assembly received several overtures on the subject, and certain documents concerning the Scottish Sustentation Fund. These were referred to a committee, which reported the next year—a very valuable paper, setting forth the necessity of some scheme to assist Pastors whose salaries are insufficient. Three plans were described: (1) That of the Free Kirk of Scotland—"a common fund, share and share alike, with supplements *ad libitum* in the wealthier charges;" (2) that of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the endowment scheme—a permanent sustentation fund, the annual income of which should be sufficient for the purpose; (3) that of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland—supplementary aid. This last was recommended and adopted.§

* *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 278. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 394.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1884*, pp. 681, 683.

§ *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 452, 564.

What was the scheme of sustentation?

1. All charges shall be divided into two classes: Full pastoral charges, the Pastors receiving a salary of at least $500, and church extension (mission) charges, having Stated Supplies or Pastors receiving less than $500. The former only shall come under the scheme for aid; the latter shall apply to the Board of Home Missions.

2. The aim shall be to make the minimum of salary in the full pastoral charges $1000.

3. Only those churches shall be aided who are paying the Pastor an average of $7.30 per annum for each member.

4. Each Presbytery is required to investigate the case of all churches of 200 members who may be paying less than $1000 salary.

5. Each church applying for aid shall appoint a committee, who shall carry out a plan of weekly or monthly contributions to this and to all the Boards of the Church.

6. All churches shall adopt some plan of systematic contributions reaching every person.

7. Each Pastor shall aid to secure from his people an amount equal to at least one-twentieth of his salary annually, to aid this scheme.

8. Each church shall report to the Assembly the salary paid its Pastor.

9. The Presbyteries shall examine carefully every application for aid under this scheme.

10. A Central Committee of seven, with a Secretary, shall be yearly appointed by the Assembly to superintend the operations and further the great object.*

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886,* pp. 452–455.

What was "the General Assembly's Committee on Ministerial Sustentation"?

This was the name given to the Central Committee of seven described above. Rev. M. W. Jacobus, D. D., was its Secretary. It was organized at Pittsburg, September 13, 1871. The aid granted by the committee to churches was understood to be for a limited time—for one, two or three years. The conditions of aid were—(1) actual installation of Pastor; (2) salary at least $500; (3) average of at least $7.30 per member, exclusive of manse; (4) endorsement of Presbytery; (5) no reduction of salary from preceding year; (6) church's salary to be first paid in full, and reported quarterly; (7) advance payment to the committee of one-twentieth of church salary; (8) systematic giving (by envelope or collectors) to all the Boards; (9) no aid to adjacent churches without consolidation. The Pastor could bear no help in these conditions. For the second year a new application as above is required, and satisfactory evidence must be given of advance toward self-sustentation.*

What was "the Sustentation Department of the Board of Home Missions"?

In 1874 a plan was adopted for the consolidation of the Boards. The Board of Home Missions shall have two departments, that of Home Missions and that of Sustentation. The claims of these shall be presented to the churches for separate collections. The churches aided by the Board shall come under the scheme of sustentation as soon as the Board and the Presbytery shall judge they are able. No church shall continue under the Home Mission department for more than five years, unless for special reasons satisfactory to the

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 452–455.

Presbytery.* In 1875 the Assembly ordered that the churches aided by this department be divided into two classes: (1) Mission pastorates, in which one or more churches constitute a pastoral relation, and contribute for the support of the Pastor a sum equal to at least an average of $7.30 per member; the minimum salary is determined by the Board and the Presbytery; and (2) Sustentation pastorates, consisting of one or more churches with a house of worship, with a Pastor installed, the contributions for his support amounting, exclusive of manse, to a sum equal to an average of at least $7.30 per member, and not less than $700. They shall increase at the rate of $50 annually toward self-support, unless Presbytery deem it impossible. The Board will increase the salary to $1000. Applications must be endorsed by Presbytery, and assurance given that collections are taken for all the Boards. Few churches, however, were able to fulfill the conditions. Many who had received aid were unable to pledge an advance of $50 on a new application, and therefore left the department in despair, though the treasury had a large unappropriated balance. Several overtures were presented to the Assembly proposing modifications, and many asking that sustentation be re-established as a separate scheme in the benevolent work of the Church.† In 1878 the following changes were adopted: (1) The separate departments of the Board of Home Missions be discontinued, and the two treasuries consolidated. (2) The churches receiving aid be divided into two classes—the sustentation pastorates and mission charges. (3) The conditions to the sustentation pastorates: a regular pastoral relation, annual collections for all the Boards, a

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 44. † *Ibid.*, *1876*, p. 60; *1877*, p. 640.

contribution of at least $600 in money toward the salary (such contribution averaging not less than $6.50 for each member) and a recommendation from Presbytery. The Board shall then supplement the salary so as to make it at least $900, which shall include the estimated rent of the house. This must not interfere with the grouping of feeble churches. The conditions to a mission charge: it may consist of one or more churches, the Minister and his charge must belong to the same Presbytery, annual collections taken for all the Boards, and recommendation from the Presbytery; the amount of aid to be determined by the Presbytery and Board. No church in either class shall receive aid for more than five years, except in special cases. The Board shall continue to commission Missionaries to new and destitute fields where no church has been organized. The fund, which in 1878 amounted to $44,879.50, was ordered to be used only for sustentation pastorates, and all the churches were recommended "to take separate collections for sustentation pastorates, and transmit the same to the Treasurer of the Board of Home Missions."* In 1880 the Assembly adopted the report of a committee, declaring that "this plan of sustentation has been of great service to the Church in many ways, and our people will not willingly let it come to naught." Presbyteries were urged "to take prompt and efficient measures to replenish this fund."†

What objects were to be accomplished by this scheme?

"It aimed primarily at a better support of the ministry in our feeble churches," and to advance these churches to be self-supporting.‡ In 1878 the ends de-

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 565.
†*Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 32. ‡ *Ibid., 1873*, p. 631.

signed to be accomplished were stated to be "the more general establishment of the pastoral office and the better support of the ministry.* In the report in 1880 the Board of Home Missions says: "The original idea of the sustentation scheme was to afford a larger salary under sustentation than under Home Missions to such churches only as showed good promise of early reaching self-support. The Church never proposed to have two schemes that would discriminate between men of the same abilities and churches in the same condition, and aid one more than the other. The larger aid was granted on sustentation only in the expectation that such a church would reach self-support much sooner than an ordinary Home Mission church."†

What action was taken in 1881?

The following resolution was adopted: "In view of the small amount of information before the Assembly in reference to sustentation, and the known fact that but a small proportion of the churches contribute to the cause; therefore be it Resolved, That the Committee of Fifteen to consider and report upon the relations of the Presbyteries to the Board of Home Missions be instructed to inquire into, and report to the next Assembly, concerning the conditions and workings of sustentation as a benevolent agency of the Church, with a view to either increasing the efficiency of the same or dropping it altogether from the list."‡ The consideration of the following resolution was postponed to the next General Assembly: "Having regard to the numbers of our Ministers, the large increase in the expense of living, their limited incomes, and the inadequacy thus far of all

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 565.

† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 134. ‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 593.

our efforts to provide fully for the exigences to which they and their families may be reduced, be it Resolved, That this whole matter be committed to a special committee, to consider it in all its bearings, and report to the next General Assembly on the practicability of extending existing agencies or adopting a new method enabling Ministers, especially those who are entering on their work, to provide in a measure for their own households in the event of their removal or being disabled."* This was considered the next year and referred to a committee to report in 1883 (see p. 486), to which was in 1884 referred an overture on ministerial life insurance, and was continued in 1885.† The committee of fifteen appointed in 1881 reported in 1883 that action on their part concerning sustentation was unnecessary, as "it is understood that the Board of Home Missions and some of the newly-organized Synods are endeavoring to determine a plan of sustentation." It was "*Resolved*, That this Assembly commend to the favorable consideration of the older Synods the suggestions of the Board of Home Missions in regard to sustentation;" which were: "The Board is of the opinion that this scheme could be made to meet all the expectations of its most sanguine friends if the Eastern Synods should see fit to adopt it for supplying their waning churches. . . . It would be well for the large and wealthy Synods of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and perhaps Michigan, Indiana and Illinois, to undertake the support of their own weak churches by special contributions called sustentation contributions. The money, as now, might be sent to the Treasurer of the Board, . . . but the Synods should dispose of it according to their own judgment,

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 592. † *Ibid.*, *1884*, p. 50; *1885*, p. 585

drawing out all they deposit. Without indicating how the details should be arranged, the Board is satisfied that the suggestion is worthy of the careful consideration of the Synods."* The plan of synodical sustentation was again recommended the following year. It has been adopted by several Synods. In 1894 the Assembly ordered that the surplus fund of the old Sustentation Scheme may hereafter be used for the general work of the Home Board, and that the Sustentation column in the Minutes of the Assembly be abolished.†

Board of Aid for Colleges.

What was the origin of this Board?

As early as 1743 a school was established under the care of Synod, and aid was given to it. In 1746 the College of New Jersey was founded. (See p. 430.)

The special committee on the functions of the Board of Education, which had been continued since 1877, reported again in 1883, when it presented a full report, stating the history of the movement, the importance and need of establishing and aiding schools and colleges under the supervision of the Church, and proposed definite action in the matter, which was adopted, viz.:

"1. That a definite agency be instituted that shall have in charge the interests of higher education as connected with the Presbyterian Church.

"2. That this agency be a separate and independent Board, with its distinct officers and work.

"3. That the Board be constituted under the following provisions, viz.:

A. The name of this Board shall be 'The Presbyterian Board of Aid for Colleges and Academies,'

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, pp. 603, 644. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 349.

and the general work shall have the limitations indicated by its title.

(*B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, and *F* defined the Board, officers, headquarters and meetings.) The Board is located in Chicago, and the executive committee must be composed of residents in Chicago or the immediate vicinity.

G. The province of the Board shall be to secure an annual offering from the churches for this cause; to co-operate with local agencies in determining sites for new institutions; to decide what institutions shall be aided; to assign to those institutions seeking endowment the special fields open to their appeals, that clashing between them may be avoided; and to discourage all independent appeals to the Church at large.

H. The funds received by the Board shall be devoted either to current expenses of struggling institutions or to permanent endowments.

I. (*a*) Every institution hereafter established, as a condition of receiving aid, shall be organically connected with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, or shall by charter provision perpetually have two-thirds of its board of control members of the Presbyterian Church.

(*b*) In case of institutions already established, and not included under the above provisions, appropriations for endowment shall be so made as to revert to the Board whenever these institutions shall pass from Presbyterian control.

(*c*) In all other respects the disbursement of funds by the Board shall be wholly discretionary with the Board, both as to amount and direction, subject always to the control of the General Assembly.

(*d*) That the Board be chartered under the laws of the State of Illinois and under the laws of such other States as may at any time hereafter, by said Board, be deemed necessary or advisable, and be empowered to receive legacies, bequests and devises.

(*e*) That the organization of the Board be secured

What further action was taken?

The Board made its first report in 1884, when it was again commended to the churches. The Assembly "discourages all independent appeals made outside the bounds of that Presbytery or Synod in which a particular institution is located." In regard to female colleges it was *Resolved*, "That it is desirable to make appropriations to institutions intended exclusively for the education of women so far as it may be consistent with the general necessities of the Board's work."† In 1885 the attention of Sessions and individuals was "called to the fact that this Board gives its certificate of commendation to every institution which it deems entitled to make a canvass for funds, and that the Assembly discourages all giving to academies or colleges, which may apply beyond the bounds of their own Presbytery or Synod, without such certificate of the Board." The Board shall see that the property of institutions aided be kept insured if it comes into its possession or be held as security. The Board was instructed to regard with great interest German Schools.‡ The Board was incorporated in 1887. The Assembly refused to change the rule inhibiting them from aiding colleges and schools for the freedmen.§ The Assembly in 1896 approved the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 396.
† *Minutes G. A. 1884*, p. 46.
‡ *Ibid., 1885*, p. 656.
§ *Ibid., 1890*, p. 51.

policy of the Board to aid but one college in a State at a time. It may employ persons connected with institutions under its care, to raise funds in any part of the church.* In 1889 and 1894 it was ordered that aid should be granted only to those institutions in which the Bible was systematically used as a text-book for every student.†

Temperance.

What action has the Assembly taken on Temperance?

In 1811 a committee was appointed to devise measures to prevent some of the mischief which was experienced from the use of spirituous liquors. Their report was adopted, requiring Ministers to preach often on the sin of intemperance, and to warn against the habits which tend to produce it. The Sessions were enjoined to exercise special vigilance over communicants in regard to this sin, and to endeavor by private warnings and public censure "to purge the Church of a sin so enormous in its mischiefs and so disgraceful to the Christian name;" and the officers and members were urged to labor to reduce the number of taverns and other places for the sale of liquor. In 1818 a pastoral letter was issued on the subject. In 1827 it was Resolved, "That the Presbyterian Church in the United States will, with all readiness of mind, co-operate with their Christian brethren of every denomination, together with every friend of our country and of humanity, in one great national effort to accomplish a universal change in the habits and customs of our country relative to the intem-

* *Minutes G. A. 1896*, p. 127.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 397.

perate use of intoxicating liquors." This was in relation to the formation of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance. A day of fasting and prayer was appointed in 1828. In 1829 and 1830 the Assembly rejoiced in the increased numbers and success of temperance societies, and urged their formation in each congregation, on the principle of entire abstinence from the use of ardent spirits. The N. S. Assembly in 1840, 1864 and 1866 reiterated the approbation of temperance societies, protested against forms and fashions which countenanced intemperance, urged all to refrain from cider, beer and ale as a beverage, and the manufacture and use of domestic wines, and declared "that total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks as a beverage is demanded from every Christian by the condition of society, the purity of the Church and the word of God." In 1865 the O. S. Assembly uttered a similar deliverance, and adopted a paper expressing the views of the Assembly on intemperance, the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits and the liability to church discipline of those who make or sell intoxicating drinks. The Assembly did not "sanction the adoption of any new terms of communion," but asserted that "the practice of manufacturing and retailing intoxicating drinks as a beverage is a sin against the brethren and against Christ, and while persevered in vitiates this evidence (of Christian character) and works a forfeiture of the privileges of the Christian communion." The reunited Church in 1871 reiterated the testimonies of former Assemblies, which the Board of Publication were ordered to print in abstract and send to all our Ministers.* Every year the Assembly has passed like resolutions on this subject.

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, pp. 483–493.

What is "the Permanent Committee on Temperance"?

In answer to an overture of 1880 a special committee reported the next year, recommending that the Assembly appoint a Permanent Committee on Temperance, which shall consist of fifteen members—eight Ministers and seven laymen—a majority of whom shall reside in and near New York; the said committee to adopt their own by-laws, subject to the approval of the Assembly.

"The duty of this Permanent Committee shall be to seek to quicken and to unite our Synods and churches in suitable measures for promoting the temperance reform; to mature and report action on the subject to the General Assembly; to gather and report such statistics as may be of value and interest to the Church; to call attention to the deliverances of the Assembly on temperance, and recommend to the Board of Publication the issue of suitable works on the subject; to codify the previous acts of the Assembly on temperance for publication by the Board; and to initiate measures for promoting similar action by other branches of the evangelical Church. The expense of such publications shall be borne by the Board. Other expenses of this committee, to the amount of $250 annually, if not otherwise provided for, shall be paid from the treasury of the General Assembly." This recommendation was adopted.* This is a new departure; the Assembly having refrained from appointed Boards or committees for special sins or virtues. The same Assembly refused to appoint a Permanent Committee on the Sabbath.†

What further action has been taken?

The committee was authorized to appeal to the churches for its expenses. The uniform testimony of the Assem-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 401. † *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 548.

blies from 1882 against intemperance was reaffirmed, and Ministers and people were urged to endeavor to secure prohibitory laws in all States, but this had no reference to any political party.* Conversion was declared to be the only hope of true reform. Congress was petitioned to enact a law allowing States to control the importation of liquors.† Sessions were urged not to admit persons engaged in the manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquors.‡ Temperance conventions were recommended. In 1886 the committee was re-organized with headquarters at Pittsburgh, Pa., and the deficiency ($2100) of the old committee was paid out of the contingent fund of the Assembly, the Presbyteries having consented.§ In 1895, Christians were urged to use their influence at the ballot-box and to vote against granting licenses and demand the enforcement of the liquor laws. "It is the sense of this Assembly that the unfermented fruit of the vine fulfils every condition in the celebration of the sacrament."‖ Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods are urged to appoint Standing Committees on Temperance.§ In 1897 a memorial on Temperance was sent to the President.¶

Committee on Manses.

What early efforts were made to secure Manses?

In 1766 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia recommended "that a glebe, with a convenient house and necessary improvements, be provided for every Minister." In 1782, 1783 and 1799, the churches were urged to see

* *Minutes G. A. 1884*, p. 75; *1885*, p. 663; *1889*, p. 103.
† *Ibid.*, *1890*, p. 83. ‡ *Ibid.*, *1888*, p. 91.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 401, 402.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1895*, p. 100. ¶ *Ibid.*, *1898*, p. 21.

that salaries be promptly paid, glebes and parsonages provided, and congregational and Pastors' libraries furnished in every church.*

What action was taken by the O. S. Assembly?

In 1843 the O. S. Assembly adopted the following paper: "For the purpose of facilitating the settlement and support of Pastors, and to guard more effectually against the temptation, or almost necessity, as in some cases seems to exist, for Ministers to involve themselves, to the injury of their usefulness, in procuring accommodations for themselves and families, Resolved, That it be earnestly recommended to our churches, wherever it is expedient and practicable, to provide suitable parsonages for the accommodation of their Pastors. Resolved, That great care be taken to have these parsonages so guarded by legal arrangements as most effectually to prevent controversy, and secure their perpetual enjoyment by the churches providing them for the continued support of the gospel through coming generations." Action was taken in 1854 in regard to ministerial support, and an important report on the subject was ordered to be published.† In 1864 the Assembly declared that, "Whereas the importance of providing parsonages for the comfortable accommodation of Presbyterian Ministers and their families is a duty, the performance of which cannot be much longer delayed, but the magnitude of the operation demands a careful scrutiny of the state of the Church and a thorough knowledge of her condition; therefore Resolved, That the churches under the care of the General Assembly be requested to reply to the following questions." These were seven in number, designed to ascertain how

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 359, 495, 499; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 95.

† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 197-203.

many churches had parsonages, their condition, plan, and how obtained. The replies were to be sent to Mr. Joseph M. Wilson, who should classify them and report the next year. In 1865 the committee was continued, and the Presbyteries were enjoined to aid in obtaining the desired information. In 1866 the Presbyteries were required to continue the inquiries, and send a pastoral letter to their churches pressing upon them "the great importance and necessity of providing manses and libraries for their Ministers."*

What action was taken by the N. S. Assembly?

In 1854 the N. S. Assembly passed a resolution on the subject of ministerial support, urging the churches "to consider the question in the spirit of Christian fidelity and liberality, and to make ample provision for those who minister to them in word and doctrine."†

What was "the Committee on Manses"?

After the reunion in 1870 the Assembly appointed a committee of five laymen, of whom Mr. Joseph M. Wilson was Chairman, which was called the Committee on Manses. It was required to collect and arrange information from all the churches as to what they had done in regard to manses for their Pastors; and the churches were instructed to reply with due diligence to communications from this committee, and thereby aid in carrying out the behests of the Assembly. The next year it was enlarged to ten members. Presbyteries were requested to appoint Committees on Manses to co-operate with the Assembly's committee. The information gathered was to be reported to the Assembly, together with plans and specifications for manses costing from $1500 to $6000;

* *Minutes G. A. 1864*, p. 290; *1865*, p. 558; *1866*, p. 73.

† *New Digest*, p. 574; *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 407.

and thanks were presented to Mr. Joseph M. Wilson for his protracted and self-denying labors in this work. In 1873 the committee was discharged, and the work of building manses was added to the duties of the Board of Church Erection.* In 1886 the Assembly approved the Board's plan: (1) appropriations to be only from special gifts; (2) made as loans without interest, payable in three years; (3) only to feeble and mission churches; and (4) secured by proper mortgage.* The manse fund had up to 1898 aided the erection of 438 manses distributing $164,322.†

Permanent Committee on Systematic Beneficence.

What was "the Committee on Benevolence and Finance"?

At the reunion a committee of twenty-one was appointed to recommend to the next Assembly a plan by which the entire benevolent work of the Church may be administered with uniformity and simplicity; and a committee of five from each branch of the Church was appointed to consider the subject of raising funds for the use of the united Church, the methods of doing so, and the objects to which they shall be applied.‡ The result was the establishment of a "Committee on Benevolence and Finance" in 1871, which was somewhat modified the next year, when the following was adopted: The committee shall consist of fifteen members, mostly businessmen of acknowledged skill in finance, and located in New York. Its duty shall be (1) to promote systematic giving, and (2) to superintend the collections for the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 377, 386. See pp. 370, 480.
† *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 100. ‡ *Ibid., 1870*, p. 74.

whole benevolent work of the Church. The contributions shall be sent to the Treasurers of the Boards or to this committee; the Treasurer of the Board of Home Missions shall be the Treasurer of this committee. It shall receive monthly statements from the Boards of their financial condition. Periodical giving, as recommended by the Assembly, was enjoined upon the churches. The Presbyteries were required to co-operate through standing committees, who shall report to the Assembly's committee every six months. Churches not contributing to all the Boards shall receive no aid from the funds of the Church.* In 1874 this committee was discontinued, with grateful acknowledgment of the important work accomplished. The principles regarded as emphasized and well established were: (1) Giving should be from spiritual motives, as an act of worship and as a means of grace. (2) It should be frequent and systematic. (3) A definite proportion, not less than one-tenth, of property should be consecrated to the Lord. (4) The benevolent work undertaken by the Assembly is equally obligatory on every member of our Church, according to his ability.†

What was "the Standing Committee on the Benevolent Work of the Church"?

When the Committee on Benevolence and Finance was discontinued in 1874, it was recommended that a Standing Committee on the Benevolent Work of the Church be established, consisting of one member from each Synod, appointed annually by the Synods. Its duty shall be (1) to determine in advance the amount probably needed by each Board, and (2) to advise as to

* *Presbyterian Digest, 1886*, p. 455.

† *Minutes G. A. 1874*, pp. 26, 88.

the modes of disbursement. For the next year $1,622,000 was estimated as required for the benevolent work; and a schedule of contributions was approved by the Assembly.* This committee differs from that on Benevolence and Finance (1) in name; (2) this is annual, the other was permanent; (3) this is appointed by the Synods, that by the Assembly; (4) this is a large committee, that was a small one; (5) this is general and representative, that was local and specific; (6) this is to give advice, that was to superintend collections and disburse funds; and (7) this is to estimate in advance the funds needed by the Boards, and that was to determine how much should be raised in each Synod. It is not, therefore, a continuation of the former committee, but a new one, in its room and stead.†

What was "the Committee of the Synods on the Benevolent Work of the Church"?

In 1875 this name was given to the committee above described, because it was appointed not by the Assembly, but by the Synods. Its duties were (1) to consider the whole work of systematic beneficence; (2) to meet and organize so as to be in session near and during the meetings of the Assembly; (3) to obtain from the Secretaries of the Boards all information needed; (4) to adjust estimates of funds required, to suggest methods for raising the same and advise modes of disbursement. Full reports must be made to the Assembly. The members shall be ex-officio members of the committees of their respective Synods, and report to the Synods the action of this committee and of the Assembly. The Chairmen of the Standing Committees of the Assembly on Church Work shall be invited to sit as corresponding members.

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 89. † *Ibid.*, *1875*, p. 530.

The members shall continue in office until their successors are elected, and one-half shall be so elected that they shall hold over until the next year. The Assembly again urged the churches to contribute to all the schemes of church work recommended by it, and advised the adoption of the plan of weekly offerings as an act of worship. A special committee of five Ruling Elders were appointed to report to the next Assembly "any suggestions they may deem expedient as to the more economical administration of the benevolent work of the Church through its several Boards and Committees."* In 1876 grave doubts were expressed as to the constitutionality of this committee, and a special committee were appointed to consider the question.† The following year it was declared (1) that the Assembly has power to direct the lower courts to appoint committees with specified powers, but which would belong to the lower courts, and must report to them, or through them to the Assembly. (2) This committee of the Synods will by its reports "be immediately influential with the people, specially as against any recommendation of the General Assembly or any appeal of the Boards." (3) It may have been "an expedient concession for the time," when at the reunion many changes had to be made, but to render it permanent "would make it a new court, an advisory body, coordinate, in part at least, with the General Assembly." (4) That this committee, while not violating any express provision of the constitution, "infringes upon the venerable dignity and moral power of our supreme court, and is at once unconstitutional and unwise." It was therefore discontinued.‡

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, pp. 531–533. ‡ *Ibid., 1876*, p. 88.
‡ *Ibid., 1877*, pp. 574, 575.

What is "the Standing Committee on Benevolence"?

This is a committee annually appointed by the Assembly to report on papers on the benevolent work of the Church which may be placed in its hands. The advisability of two committees on this subject was called in question in 1876, and the synodical committee was the next year discontinued, and the Synods were requested to send up annually a statistical report of the benevolent work of the Presbyteries, to be placed in the hands of this committee to be the basis of its report to the Assembly.* But the next year only three of the Synods complied with this request. The Assembly therefore reiterated the request and emphasized it, recommending that "these synodical reports embrace the statistics gathered by the Presbyteries at the meetings in the spring preceding the meetings of the Synods, and contained in the minutes of the General Assembly."†

What is "the Special Committee on Systematic Beneficence"?

In 1879 the Standing Committee on Benevolence again reported the almost entire neglect of the recommendation of 1878 by the Synods. After reviewing the history of the past years, the committee considered that it was evident that "the Church wants and will have no new agency in addition to those which she has already to collect and disburse funds and to instruct her Boards as to the amount and the manner of their appropriations." And it recommended the creation of a new committee, to be called "the Permanent Committee on Systematic Beneficence," which shall see that each Synod and Presbytery has a Committee on Benevolence, and secure through these such attention to the subject "that the

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 582. † *Ibid., 1878*, p. 104.

matter of systematic beneficence and church work will be kept constantly before Ministers and churches until these three points are attained: (1) Each church has a proper scriptural plan; (2) each church contributes to every Board; and (3) proper and fresh information on the general work of the Presbyterian Church is constantly presented to church courts and individual churches." Such a committee was formed, consisting of three Ministers and three Elders; and it was Resolved, "That, in view of the fact that so many of our churches fail to contribute to all the Boards of our Church, in the judgment of this Assembly the members of all our congregations have a right to an opportunity to contribute at least once a year to each of the Boards, as required by the highest authority of the Church, and the Sessions of the churches have no right to withhold that opportunity." Resolved, "That it is the duty of each Minister in charge to give information, set forth the privilege of giving, and urge the claims of each Board in connection with the annual collection."* The next year this committee presented its first report, stating that the subject had received more attention throughout the Church than for many years previous. The committee was reappointed. In 1881 this committee was enlarged to twelve, so as to distribute its labors more widely, and Cleveland was made its centre. The work is to "be prosecuted in the future, as in the past two years, in full sympathy with all of our Boards, endeavoring to secure from every member of every church an adequate contribution for each of our objects of benevolence; and that for this purpose every Presbytery and Synod should have a Committee on Systematic Benef-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 400.

icence, and each church should have a plan of giving, and each member should be taught to set apart regularly a certain proportion of his income to the Lord." "Each Session is desired to fill, according to the injunctions of the Assembly, the statistical blank sent them in the interests of this committee."* The Board of Publication was requested to issue "a form of a systematic blank."

In 1886 the name of the Committee was changed to "the Special Committee on Systematic Beneficence."*

A new chapter was added to the Directory for Worship. See page 566. In 1894 the Assembly considered the amount raised for congregational expenses a fair basis on which to estimate the amount to be given to the general work of the Church. The amount neeeded by the Boards should be apportioned among the Presbyteries and churches.† In 1895 a schedule was adopted of distribution among the Boards of the contributions—Foreign 33 per cent., Home 31 per cent. and each of the other Boards 6 per cent.‡ Presbyteries should question their non-contributing churches.§

Presbyterian Historical Society.

What early efforts were made to collect material for the history of the Presbyterian Church?

In 1791 a committee was appointed by the Assembly to devise a plan for collecting materials for a history of the Presbyterian Church in North America. They recommended that each Minister furnish a history of his church at the next meeting of the Assembly, and that old records of Presbyteries and Synods be examined. This request was repeated for several years. In 1804, Rev. Ashbel Green, D. D., and Mr. Ebenezer Hazard were appointed to write

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 400.
† *Minutes G. A. 1894*, p. 147.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1895*, p. 103.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

a history "under the care of the General Assembly," and Presbyteries and churches were urged to forward to them the materials already collected. In 1813 this committee reported that considerable progress had been made, but that it was impracticable for them to go on with the work. Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D., was appointed in their place, and directed to continue and complete the history. In 1819, Dr. Green was reappointed, and associated with Dr. Miller. In 1825 this committee desired to be discharged. It was Resolved, "That the request made by the Rev. Drs. Green and Miller, to be released from their appointment to write the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, is received with unfeigned regret." A committee of three, Rev. Drs. Green, Janeway and Ely, were appointed a committee "to receive from Rev. Dr. Green the documents and annals and information prepared by him to be furnished, and to collect such other documents as may be in their power and may be necessary to the completion of the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, with as little delay as possible." They were to report from time to time their progress. All Presbyteries formed since 1797 were urged to compile their several histories and send them to the committee, and an agent was appointed in each Synod to collect all such documents, printed and manuscript, as may throw any light on the history of any part of the Presbyterian Church. In 1836, Rev. L. Halsey, D. D., was appointed in the place of Rev. E. S. Ely, D. D., who resigned.* After great efforts and years of labor valuable histories were collected, but others were withheld and lost, owing to the fact that when the General Assembly of 1791 ordered

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 502–504.

their preparation it failed to make provision for their preservation.*

What is the Presbyterian Historical Society?

It is a society which was organized at the meeting of the General Assembly in Charleston, S. C., in 1852. Some changes were made in 1856. It was incorporated in 1857 by the Legislature of Pennsylvania. The charter was amended in 1877. Its objects are to collect and preserve the materials, and to promote the knowledge, of the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The Executive Committee reports at the annual meeting, and causes an address to be delivered during the meeting of the General Assembly or Synod of each church represented in the society. It is not confined to our denomination, but is open to all the branches of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.†

What action has the Assembly taken in reference to this Society?

In 1853 the O. S. Assembly testified their interest in the organization of this society, and deemed "the objects of sufficient importance to call the attention of the Synod and Presbyteries to such forms of co-operation in securing the materials of our church history as may seem to them expedient." All the manuscript materials pertaining to the history of the Presbyterian Church which have been collected in past years under their authority were committed to the custody of the society.‡ The society is located in Philadelphia.

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 539.

† *Webster's History of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 695–700. This was the first volume of the publications of the Historical Society.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 505.

In 1873 the Assembly, on the recommendation of the Committee on the Centennial Anniversary of the Independence of the United States, ordered that six historical discourses should be prepared, by persons duly appointed, on different periods of our history and methods of our church work, and that on the first Sabbath of July, 1876, the Pastor of each church under the jurisdiction of the Assembly shall deliver a history of his church, and transmit a copy of said history to the Historical Society "for arrangement and for such other disposition of it as the General Assembly or the committee appointed to have charge of the subject may direct." On the same day collections were ordered to be taken in all the churches for the purpose of the erection of a suitable fireproof building in which to preserve the valuable records, books, pamphlets and manuscripts belonging to the society.* In 1877 a valuable report was presented, setting forth the value of the library of the society, and pleading for the means needed for the erection of the fireproof building. The Assembly renewed its recommendations, urging those Pastors to send in their historical discourses who have not yet done so, and that collections be taken for the building and the Endowment Fund.† In 1878 the "General Assembly rejoiced in the success of the Presbyterian Historical Society in their securement of $20,000 for the safe housing of their precious historic treasures. Its rooms are now in Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia. "The Assembly earnestly commended the objects of the society to the attention and liberality of the churches."‡ This recommendation was repeated in 1879 and 1881. It has (in 1898) 40,000

* *Minutes G. A. 1873*, p. 490. † *Ibid., 1877*, p. 537.
‡ *Ibid., 1878*, p. 120.

volumes and 75,000 pamphlets, many of which are invaluable. In 1896 the Trustees of the Assembly were authorized to receive bequests for the Historical Society and hold them in trust.*

CHAPTER XIX.

OF MODERATORS.

I. What is a Moderator?

The presiding officer of a meeting for transaction of business is called the President or Moderator. The latter is the title given to the presiding officer in our church courts. A Chairman directs the meetings and work of a committee or commission, and is generally chosen by the court appointing the committee, the first one named being the Chairman. The committee may, however, choose its own Chairman. The Moderator of a court is determined according to the rules of the court.† *"It is equally necessary in the judicatories of the Church, as in other assemblies, that there should be a Moderator or President, that the business may be conducted with order and despatch."*

II. What authority has the Moderator?

"He is to be considered as possessing, by delegation from the whole body, all authority necessary for the preservation of order, for convening and adjourning the judicatory, and directing its operations according to the rules of the Church." He is a ministerial officer with delegated authority, and servant of the body over which he presides.‡ *"He is to propose to the judicatory every subject*

* *Minutes G. A. 1896*, p. 47. † See pp. 129, 528.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 188.

of deliberation that comes before them. He may propose what appears to him the most regular and speedy way of bringing any business to issue. He shall prevent the members from interrupting each other, and require them in speaking always to address the Chair. He shall prevent a speaker from deviating from the subject and from using personal reflections. He shall silence those who refuse to obey order. He shall prevent members who attempt to leave the judicatory without leave obtained from him. He shall at a proper season, when the deliberations are ended, put the question and call the votes. If the judicatory be equally divided, he shall possess the casting vote. If he be not willing to decide, he shall put the question a second time; and if the judicatory be again equally divided, and he decline to give his vote, the question shall be lost. In all questions he shall give a concise and clear statement of the object of the vote; and, the vote being taken, shall then declare how the question is decided. And he shall likewise be empowered, on any extraordinary emergency, to convene the judicatory by his circular letter before the ordinary time of meeting." He may speak to points of order in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose, and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the judicatory by any two members. He shall appoint all committees, except when the court shall decide otherwise. He may vote with the other members when they vote by ballot; and give a casting vote when the body is equally divided. He cannot have a double vote. While in the chair he cannot take part in any debate, but may leave the chair for that purpose. In judicial cases he has the right to administer oaths to the witnesses. His authority to do so is not derived from the judicatory over which he presides, nor from the Gen-

eral Assembly, but from the constitution, or articles of compact, which our churches have adopted, and by which they have agreed to be governed as a Christian community. Oaths prescribed by ecclesiastical authority in no respect interfere with our relations to civil society, nor are they a violation of those laws of the State which prescribe the manner in which civil oaths shall be administered.*

Must the Moderator be a member of the judicatory?

Not necessarily so, though generally he is. The Moderator of the Session is generally the Pastor of the church. But under certain circumstances the Session may invite a Minister of the Presbytery to preside, and the Presbytery may appoint a Moderator when there is no Pastor. The Minister thus presiding does not become a member of the Session, although he may give a casting vote, according to the provisions of this chapter.†

The Moderator of our General Assembly presides during the organization of the next Assembly and until a Moderator is elected, although he may not be a member of that body. In case he be absent, the last Moderator present, or if there be none, the senior member present, shall take the chair. The "last Moderator present" may be interpreted (1) according to the decision of the Assembly of 1835, to mean present, although not a member (the N. S. Assembly reaffirmed this in 1861)—or (2), according to the deliverance of the O. S. Assembly in 1843, that it is the deliberate judgment of the General Assembly that no person is authorized to open the session of the Assembly or preside at the opening of the said session except the Moderator of the Assembly

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 266, 584; *Book of Discipline*, sect. 61.
See p. 531.

† See p. 129.

immediately preceding, or in his absence a commissioner to the Assembly.* In 1880, the Moderator of the preceding Assembly being absent, Rev. J. Eells, D. D., the Moderator in 1877, preached the opening sermon and presided until the new Moderator was chosen. He was not a commissioner, and no objections were made. But the Assembly some days later resolved to change Rule II. of the General Rules for Judicatories † by inserting the words, "being a commissioner," after the words, "the last Moderator present."*

Must the Moderator ever vacate the chair?

If the Moderator be a member of the inferior court from whose decision an appeal or complaint is made, he should during the trial vacate the chair, and the last Moderator, being a commissioner, present, or some other Minister, should preside.‡

III. How are Moderators chosen?

If the church be vacant, the Presbytery should appoint one of its Ministers to be Moderator of the Session.§ If the congregation call a Pastor, and he becomes Moderator of the Session by the act of Presbytery installing him Pastor, if at any time he be sick or absent, or if it be thought best for prudential reasons that the Pastor should not preside, the Session may invite a Minister of the same Presbytery to take his place, or if this be "impracticable without great inconvenience," they may select one of their own number to preside.§

"*The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be chosen from year to year, or at every meeting of the Presbytery, as the Presbytery may think best.*" This is understood as au-

* See p. 301. *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 265.
† See p. 530. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 262.
§ See p. 131.

thorizing the usage of some Presbyteries of electing the Moderator to serve for six months. Nominations may be made by any member of the body. If only one is proposed, the vote may be taken at once. But if several are nominated, they are each called upon to vote and to retire while the roll is called, and the votes are given *vivâ voce.* In some Presbyteries the choice is made by ballot. A committee is appointed to bring in the person elected, who is inducted into office by the retiring Moderator.

"*The Moderator of the Synod and of the General Assembly shall be chosen at each meeting of those judicatories.*" The mode of nomination and electing is the same as that described above in the case of the Presbyteries, except that in making the nomination the presbyterial relation of the Minister is mentioned. This became a standing rule of the Assembly in 1791.* The O. S. Assembly in 1846, and from 1851 to 1869, Resolved, "That a majority of all the votes given for Moderator be necessary for a choice." This was reaffirmed in 1887.* The mode of installation since 1791 is as follows: The newly-elected Moderator is brought before the Assembly by a committee appointed for that purpose, and presented to the retiring Moderator, "who shall address him and the house in the following or like manner: 'Sir, it is my duty to inform you, and to announce to this house, that you are duly elected to the office of Moderator of this General Assembly. For your direction in office, and for the direction of this Assembly in all your deliberations, before I leave this seat I am to read to you and this house the rules contained in the records of this Assembly, which I doubt not will be carefully observed by both in conducting the business

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 261.

that may come before you.'" Formerly, these rules of order were read. It has, however, become the usage to put the book containing them into the hands of the Moderator, making a modification in the above language. The Moderator shall proceed thus: "Now, having read these rules according to order for your instruction as Moderator, and for the direction of all the members in the management of business, praying that Almighty God may direct and bless all the deliberations of this Assembly for the glory of his name and for the edification and comfort of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, I resign my place and office as Moderator." Generally, he does not confine himself to the above language, and the new Moderator often makes a short reply to him and an address to the Assembly.*

What are the rules read to the Moderator?

The General Rules for Judicatories. They are referred to in the above form of induction, which was adopted in 1791, but were not submitted to the Presbyteries, and therefore form no part of the constitution. They have received several modifications. At the reunion it was found that the rules used by the two branches were nearly alike, and only few changes were made. They are, as amended in 1885, 1887 and 1896,†

General Rules for Judicatories.

I. "The Moderator shall take the chair precisely at the hour to which the judicatory stands adjourned, and shall immediately call the members to order, and on the appearance of a quorum shall open the session with prayer."

II. "If a quorum be assembled at the hour appoint-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 261. †*Ibid.*, p. 265.

ed, and the Moderator be absent, the last Moderator present, being a commissioner, or, if there be none, the senior member present, shall be requested to take his place without delay until a new election."*

III. "If a quorum be not assembled at the hour appointed, any two members shall be competent to adjourn from time to time, that an opportunity may be given for a quorum to assemble."

IV. "It shall be the duty of the Moderator, at all times, to preserve order, and to endeavor to conduct all business before the judicatory to a speedy and proper result."

V. "It shall be the duty of the Moderator carefully to keep notes of the several articles of business which may be assigned for particular days, and to call them up at the time appointed."

VI. "The Moderator may speak to points of order in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose, and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the judicatory by any two members."

VII. "The Moderator shall appoint all committees, except in those cases in which the judicatory shall decide otherwise. In appointing the Standing Committees, the Moderator may appoint a Vice-Moderator, who may occupy the chair at his request and otherwise assist him in the discharge of his duties."†

VIII. "When a vote is taken by ballot in any judicatory, the Moderator shall vote with the other members; but he shall not vote in any other case unless the judicatory be equally divided; when, if he do not choose to vote, the question shall be lost."

IX. "The person first named on any committee shall

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 45. † *Ibid., 1885*, p. 590.

be considered as the chairman thereof, whose duty it shall be to convene the committee, and, in case of his absence or inability to act, the second-named member shall take his place and perform his duties."

X. "It shall be the duty of the Clerk, as soon as possible after the commencement of the sessions of every judicatory, to form a complete roll of the members present, and put the same into the hands of the Moderator. And it shall also be the duty of the Clerk, whenever any additional members take their seats, to add their names in their proper places to the said roll."

XI. "It shall be the duty of the Clerk immediately to file all papers in the order in which they have been read, with proper endorsements, and to keep them in perfect order. The Stated Clerk shall receive all overtures, memorials and miscellaneous papers addresssed to the judicatory; shall make record of the same and deliver them to the Committee on Bills and Overtures for appropriate disposition or reference. This committee shall have the floor on the reassembling of the judicatory after each adjournment, to report its recommendations as to reference of papers, and this right of the committee shall take precedence of the orders of the day. This committee shall report the papers retained by it, as well as those recommended for reference to other committees, and no committee shall report on matters which have not been referred to it by the judicatory." *

XII. "The minutes of the last meeting of the judicatory shall be presented at the commencement of its sessions, and if requisite read and corrected."

XIII. "Business left unfinished at the last sitting is ordinarily to be taken up first."

* *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 590.

XIV. "A motion must be seconded, and afterward repeated by the Moderator, or read aloud, before it is debated; and every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Moderator or any member require it."

XV. "Any member who shall have made a motion shall have liberty to withdraw it, with consent of his second, before any debate has taken place thereon, but not afterward without the leave of the judicatory."

XVI. "If a motion under debate contains several parts, any two members may have it divided, and a question taken on each part."

XVII. "When various motions are made with respect to the filling of blanks with particular numbers or times, the question shall always be first taken on the highest number and longest time."

XVIII. "Motions to lay on the table, to take up business, to adjourn, and the call for the previous question, shall be put without debate. On questions of order, postponement or commitment no member shall speak more than once. On all other questions each member may speak twice, but not oftener without express leave of the judicatory."

XIX. "When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received unless to adjourn, to lay on the table, to postpone indefinitely, to postpone until a day certain, to commit or amend; which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are herein arranged; and the motion for adjournment shall be always in order."

XX. "An amendment, and also an amendment to an amendment, may be moved on any motion, but a motion to amend an amendment to an amendment shall not be in order. Action on amendments shall precede action on

the original motion. A substitute shall be treated as an amendment." *

XXI. "A distinction shall be observed between a motion to lay on the table for the present and a motion to lay on the table unconditionally—viz.: a motion to lay on the table for the present shall be taken without debate; and if carried in the affirmative, the effect shall be to place the subject on the docket, and it may be taken up and considered at any subsequent time. But a motion to lay on the table unconditionally shall be taken without debate; and if carried in the affirmative, it shall not be in order to take up the subject during the same meeting of the judicatory without a vote of reconsideration."

XXII. "The previous question shall be put in this form, namely: Shall the main question be now put? It shall only be admitted when demanded by a majority of the members present; and the effect shall be to put an end to all debate and bring the body to a direct vote—first, on a motion to commit the subject under consideration (if such motion shall have been made); secondly, if the motion for commitment does not prevail, on pending amendments; and lastly, on the main question."

XXIII. "A question shall not again be called up or reconsidered at the same sessions of the judicatory at which it has been decided, unless by consent of two-thirds of the members who were present at the decision, and unless the motion to reconsider be made and seconded by persons who voted with the majority."

XXIV. "A subject which has been indefinitely postponed, either by the operation of the previous question or by a motion for indefinite postponement, shall not be

* *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 590.

again called up during the same sessions of the judicatory, unless by the consent of three-fourths of the members who were present at the decision."

XXV. "Members ought not, without weighty reasons, to decline voting, as this practice might leave the decision of very interesting questions to a small proportion of the judicatory. Silent members, unless excused from voting, must be considered as acquiescing with the majority."

XXVI. "When the Moderator has commenced taking the vote, no further debate or remark shall be admitted, unless there has evidently been a mistake, in which case the mistake shall be rectified, and the Moderator shall recommence taking the vote. If the House shall pass the motion to 'vote on a given subject at a time named,' speeches shall thereafter be limited to ten minutes. Should the hour for adjournment or recess arrive during the voting, it shall be postponed to finish the vote, unless the majority shall vote to adjourn; in which case the voting shall on the reassembling of the House take precedence of all other business till it is finished. Under this rule 'the yeas and nays' shall not be called except on the final motion to adopt as a whole. This motion to fix a time for voting shall be put without debate."*

XXVII. "The yeas and nays on any question shall not be recorded, unless required by one-third of the members present. If division is called for on any vote, it shall be by a rising vote without a count. If on such a rising vote the Moderator is unable to decide, or a quorum rise to second a call for 'tellers,' then the vote shall be taken by rising, and the count made by tellers, who shall pass

* *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 590.

through the aisles and report to the Moderator the number voting on each side."*

XXVIII. "No member in the course of debate shall be allowed to indulge in personal reflections."

XXIX. "If more than one member rise to speak at the same time, the member who is most distant from the Moderator's chair shall speak first. In the discussion of all matters where the sentiment of the House is divided, it is proper that the floor should be occupied alternately by those representing the different sides of the question."*

XXX. "When more than three members of the judicatory shall be standing at the same time, the Moderator shall require all to take their seats, the person only excepted who may be speaking."

XXXI. "Every member, when speaking, shall address himself to the Moderator, and shall treat his fellow-members, and especially the Moderator, with decorum and respect."

XXXII. "No speaker shall be interrupted, unless he be out of order, or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misrepresentations."

XXXIII. "Without express permission no member of a judicatory, while business is going on, shall engage in private conversation, nor shall members address one another, nor any person present, but through the Moderator."

XXXIV. "It is indispensable that members of ecclesiastical judicatories maintain great gravity and dignity while judicially convened; that they attend closely in their speeches to the subject under consideration, and avoid prolix and desultory harangues; and when they deviate from the subject it is the privilege of any mem-

* *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 590.

ber, and the duty of the Moderator, to call them to order."

XXXV. "If any member act, in any respect, in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the Moderator, to call him to order."

XXXVI. "If any member consider himself aggrieved by a decision of the Moderator, it shall be his privilege to appeal to the judicatory, and the question on the appeal shall be taken without debate."

XXXVII. "No member shall retire from any judicatory without the leave of the Moderator, nor withdraw from it to return home without the consent of the judicatory."

XXXVIII. "All judicatories have the right to sit in private on business which in their judgment ought not to be matter of public speculation."

XXXIX. "Besides the right to sit judicially in private whenever they think proper to do so, all judicatories have the right to hold what are commonly called 'interlocutory meetings,' in which members may freely converse together, without the formalities which are usually necessary in judicial proceedings."

XL. "Whenever a judicatory is about to sit in a judicial capacity, it shall be the duty of the Moderator solemnly to announce from the chair that the body is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty in which they are about to act."

XLI. "In all cases before a judicatory, where there is an accuser or prosecutor, it is expedient that there be a committee of the judicatory appointed (provided the

number of members be sufficient to admit it without inconvenience), who shall be called the 'Judicial Committee,' and whose duty it shall be to digest and arrange all papers, and to prescribe, under the direction of the judicatory, the whole order of proceedings. The members of this committee shall be entitled, notwithstanding their performance of this duty, to sit and vote in the cause as members of the judicatory."

XLII. "The permanent officers of a judicatory shall have the rights of corresponding members in matters touching their several offices."*

XLIII. "The Moderator of every judicatory above the church Session, in finally closing its sessions, in addition to prayer, may cause to be sung an appropriate psalm or hymn, and shall pronounce the apostolical benediction."†

What Standing Orders were adopted?

In 1879 the Standing Orders were adopted. It was *Resolved*, "That they be regarded as supplemental to and forming a part of the Standing Rules for Judicatories." They have been amended and now (1898) stand.

"1. The General Assembly meet invariably on the third Thursday of May, annually, at 11 o'clock A. M."

"2. The credentials of commissioners and delegates are to be presented at a previous hour of the same day or of the preceding day, according to public notice, to the Stated and Permanent Clerks, acting as a Permanent Committee on Commissions."

"3. The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated by the Assembly on the evening of Thursday, the first day of their sessions."

* *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 590.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 265-269.

"4. The evenings of the days of session are assigned to popular meetings in the following order:

"The evening of Friday, the second day, to the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work, and Sabbath-school Interest of the Church.

"The afternoon of the first Sunday to the Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions; the evening to Young People's work for Home and Foreign Missions.

"The evening of Monday, the fourth day, to Missions among the Freedmen.

"The evening of Tuesday, the fifth day, to the Home Mission Work.

"The evening of Wednesday, the sixth day, to the Foreign Mission Work.

"The evening of Friday, the eighth day, to the cause of Temperance."

"The evening of second Sabbath to aid for Colleges and Academies."

"5. The reports of the Standing Committees shall be considered at the times herein designated, viz.:

"Ministerial Relief, Saturday, at 10 o'clock A. M.

"Freedmen, Monday, at 10 o'clock A. M.

"Education, Monday, at 3 o'clock P. M.

"Home Missions, Tuesday, at 10 o'clock A. M.

"Aid for Colleges and Academies, Tuesday, at 3 P. M."

"Foreign Missions, Wednesday, at 10 o'clock A. M.

"Publication and Sabbath-school Work, Wednesday, at 3 o'clock P. M.

"Church Erection, second Thursday, at 3 o'clock P. M.

"Benevolence, second Thursday, at 7.30 o'clock P. M.

"Temperance, second Friday, at 3 o'clock P. M.

"6. That the Standing Committees on Home Missions and Foreign Missions have each two and a half hours;

and those on Education, Publication, Church Erection, Ministerial Relief, Freedmen, Temperance and Aid for Colleges have each one and a half hours. That the Secretaries and the Chairmen of the Standing and Special Committees be requested to make their statements within the limits of half an hour."*

"7. The Stated Clerk shall receive all memorials, overtures and other miscellaneous papers addressed to the General Assembly, shall make record of the same, and deliver them for distribution or reference to the Standing Committee on Bills and Overtures. All complaints and appeals, however, shall be transmitted by the Stated Clerk directly to the Judicial Committee."

"8. All special committees appointed by one General Assembly to report to the next Assembly shall be ready to present their reports on the second day of the session."†

"9. The Stated Clerk shall have printed and ready for distribution, as far as practicable, on the morning of the day fixed for their consideration, the resolutions appended to the reports of special committees appointed at previous Assemblies to report at that meeting."

"10. The Stated Clerk and Permanent Clerk shall be a committee to revise the phraseology of all papers sent down to the Presbyteries to be voted upon, provided that in no case shall this Committee so change the phraseology as to alter the meaning."‡

"11. The Stated Clerk and Permanent Clerk shall be a Committee to supervise the publication of any and all editions of the Constitution hereafter issued by the Board of Publication, and also of the Rules for Judicatories."‡

"12. Each Board and Permanent Committee is in-

* *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 597. † *Ibid., 1884*, pp. 81, 107.
‡ *Ibid., 1886*, p. 113.

structed to send up its minutes with its report, that these minutes may be revised by the Assembly on the report of the appropriate standing committee.*

"13. A sufficient number of the reports of the Boards and Committees shall be forwarded by them to the place of meeting of each Assembly prior to the day of meeting; and a complete file of the same, stitched together, shall be delivered to each Commissioner.†

"14. In all regions where, through the organization of Union Presbyteries, there are no Presbyteries in connection with this Assembly, each mission organized as such under our Board of Foreign Missions may send to the General Assembly an ordained Missionary or Ruling Elder as a delegate; and the Standing Rules of the Assembly are hereby so amended that such delegate is entitled to sit as an advisory member in the Assembly, and to speak, under the rules, on all questions, and that his expenses from his domicile in this country to and during the Assembly and return shall be met, as those of Commissioners, out of the funds of the Assembly.‡

"15. No person shall serve as a member of a Board who is an executive officer or employé of said Board, or a member of any other benevolent Board of the Church, and no more than one Ruling Elder from the same congregation shall serve on a Board at the same time.§

"16. Any vacancy occurring in the membership of any of the Boards of the Church during the interval between the Assemblies may be filled until the next succeeding meeting of the Assembly by the Board in which such vacancy may occur.‖

* *Minutes G. A. 1885*, p. 690.
† *Ibid., 1886*, p. 77.
‡ *Ibid., 1887*, p. 240.
§ *Ibid., 1887*, pp. 51, 108.
‖ *Ibid., 1887*, p. 128.

"17. The Moderator is authorized to fill by appointment any vacancies which may occur by resignation or otherwise in any of the Special Committees.*

"18. All resolutions for the appropriation of money outside the Boards should be brought before the Financial Committee before action by the Assembly.†

"19. The recommendation of any particular congregation to the benevolence of the denomination by the General Assembly is not to be understood as creating either a legal or a moral obligation upon the Assembly for the payment of the amount recommended to be contributed by the churches.‡

"20. All overtures must be presented to the Assembly not later than the fifth day of its sessions.§

"21. The Stated and Permanent Clerks shall be a committee to have the oversight of arrangements for the entertainment of the General Assembly."‖

May an Elder be chosen Moderator?

In the Session the Pastor or some other Minister of the Presbytery is the proper Moderator. In emergencies, when a Minister cannot be obtained "without great inconvenience," an Elder may preside. See pp. 129, 130.

In the higher courts such an emergency cannot occur. The word "Minister" is not used in describing the Moderator; several ministerial duties are required of him, such as preaching a sermon, offering the ordaining prayer, and pronouncing the apostolic benediction. The Moderators of the Assembly are always Ministers. In 1890 the Assembly was asked if an Elder, being Moderator of Presbytery, could preside or take part in ordination, and answered that he could not.¶

* *Minutes G. A.*, pp. 192, 209.
† *Ibid.*, *1892*, p. 199.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1892*, p. 36; *1893*, p. 41.
§ *Ibid.*, *1894*, p. 160.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 262-264.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 572.

How shall the Moderator open and close the meetings?

With prayer. This is required in the higher courts,* and the Assembly has sustained the exception to the Sessional records when this is not done in Session.† See page 176.

What is an Adsessor?

In the Reformed (Dutch) Church a Vice-Moderator is chosen, and called the Adsessor. In 1878 a proposition was referred to the Committee on Revision of the "Book of Discipline," that a similar officer be elected annually in our Assembly. This is provided for in Sect. VII. of General Rules for Judicatories.‡ In the Church of Scotland the Assessor is the official adviser of the Moderator.

CHAPTER XX.

OF CLERKS.

What is a Clerk?

The person appointed to make and preserve the records of a meeting is called the Secretary or Clerk. In courts of our Church this officer is called the Clerk. "*Every judicatory shall choose a Clerk to record their transactions, whose continuance shall be during pleasure. It shall be the duty of the Clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required; and such extracts, under the hand of the Clerk, shall be considered as authentic vouchers of the fact which they*

* *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. xi.; ch. xi., sect. v.; ch. xii., sect. viii. See pp. 239, 257, 303.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 161. See pp. 176, 538.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 102. See p. 531.

declare, in any ecclesiastical judicatory and to every part of the Church."

How long does a Clerk continue in office?

His "*continuance shall be during pleasure.*" He is the permanent officer of the judicatory, and often retains his position for many years. The term of service is determined by the Judicatory, but terminates on his removal from its bounds.* At first the Clerk of Presbytery was elected at each meeting. This was the custom in Synod until the organization of the Assembly. In 1773 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia re-elected the Clerks of the preceding year, and after that date sometimes re-elected one or both Clerks—not, however, continuing them in office longer than for two years.†

Must the Clerk be a member of the judicatory?

The Moderator and Clerk are ministerial officers. "In respect to their office they are servants merely, and not members of the body. Of the Clerk this would seem to be unquestionably true." "As far as any provision of the book is involved, it is plain that a judicatory may select any convenient person, though not a member, to record its transactions and discharge all other duties pertaining to a Clerk."* For the part of those duties usually devolved upon a temporary Clerk a Presbytery may employ a Licentiate or other person, not a member of the body. Yet, as he is "*to preserve the records,*" he should be under the control of the court.

Who is the Clerk of Session?

Any one chosen by the Session. Generally he is a member of the Session. It is his duty to make a true record, which must be approved at the next meeting, to take

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 239, 586; *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 56.

† *Presbyterian Records*, pp. 9, 48, 234, 291, 437.

charge of the books and papers, to give certified copies of portions when properly requested (by order of Session), to issue citations, to present the minutes to the Presbytery for its review, to keep the sessional registers and the records of congregational meetings called by the Session.*

Who is the Clerk of Presbytery?

One chosen by the Presbytery, and generally a member. His duties are to keep the record, which must be submitted to the Synod for review every year, together with a full report of changes and a narrative of the state of religion. A similar report and narrative must also be sent to each General Assembly.†

What is a Stated Clerk?

In the Presbytery, the Synod and the General Assembly it has been found that the Clerk needs assistance, especially during the meetings of those judicatories. The Clerk is called the Stated Clerk, to distinguish him from those appointed to help him. At first, the Clerk was able to perform the whole duty required, but after the union of the two Synods of New York and Philadelphia his work so increased that in 1763 he was granted an assistant. They were called the Clerk and his Assistant.‡ At the organization of the Assembly the title "Stated Clerk" appears in describing the Clerk of that body, and the Clerk of Presbytery, of Synod and of the General Assembly have since been called the Stated Clerk of those judicatories.§ His salary was in 1870 fixed at $400 per annum. In addition to the duties described above, the Assembly in 1801 added that of notifying the Presbyteries if their commissioners neglected their duties, were inattentive to the rules of decorum or left the Assembly

* See pp. 171–176.

† See p. 235.

‡ *Presbyterian Records*, p. 322.

§ *New Digest*, p. 174.

without permission; and in 1807 that of printing extracts of the Minutes and distributing the copies as the Assembly may direct. In 1871 he was made also the Treasurer of the Assembly, and $100 was added to his salary.* In 1892 his salary was increased to $500, and he was required to give an official bond in the sum of $10,000.† The next year the Stated Clerk was authorized to employ such clerical assistance as may be used to the best advantage in securing the early publication of the Minutes.‡

In 1894 the Standing Committees on Mileage and Finance were requested to report on the duties of the Stated Clerk. The report was adopted, and is as follows: "The duties of the Stated Clerk have been steadily increasing in number and variety, and in the laborious character of the work imposed by them. At the present time the Stated Clerk is required to transcribe for the press the 'Minutes' ordered to be published from year to year; to superintend the printing of the 'Minutes,' and papers ordered to be printed; to distribute the 'Minutes' to persons entitled to them; to have charge of all the books and papers of the General Assembly; to give attested copies of all minutes and other documents; to receive all Memorials, Overtures, and other papers addressed to the Assembly; to distribute the bound volumes of the Reports of the Boards; to have charge of the entire railroad arrangements for the transportation of Commissioners; to transmit all Overtures to the Presbyteries and receive the answers; under the direction of the Moderator to prepare and carry forward the business of the Assembly, including the printing of the Roll, etc., during its sessions; to carry on the cor-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 270. † *Minutes G. A. 1892*, p. 199.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1893*, p. 46.

respondence of the Assembly; to report to the Assembly upon the statistics of the Church; to perform all the duties of Treasurer, and to transact such other business directly pertaining to his office as the Assembly may from time to time appoint.

"Besides performing these duties, your Committee are of the opinion that the Stated Clerk might advantageously be employed as Secretary and Custodian of the correspondence of the *ad interim* Committees, without membership therein, and recommend that he be so designated.

"Not only are these duties arduous and exacting, but their nature is such as to call for special qualifications of a high order in the incumbent of the office. The work from March until November is continuous, while during the remainder of the year the correspondence of the Assembly, and other work pertaining to the office engages more or less attention daily. . . . The duties above described now make such demands upon the Stated Clerk as apparently to preclude the acceptance by him of any pastoral charge, and thus practically to employ his entire time. In view of the facts stated, your Committee regard the compensation heretofore allowed to his office as wholly inadequate. They therefore recommend that for the services hereinbefore specified and recommended the compensation be fixed at the sum of three thousand dollars ($3000) per annum, payable upon December 31 for the calendar year then closing.

"Permanent quarters for the accommodation of the Stated Clerk and the preservation of the records of the Assembly should be arranged for. They therefore recommend that the Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work be requested to assign to the Stated Clerk

such rooms, not needed for their own use, as will afford suitable accommodations as an office and a document-room, the expense of fitting up such rooms to be defrayed out of the Contingent Fund." *

What power has he over books and papers?

He should give a receipt for all papers received; and he shall not deliver any records or papers in his possession to any person, except by the order of the Assembly, nor without a receipt.† He has power, upon official information, "to correct obvious errors and to supply evident omissions in the statistical reports sent up by the Presbyteries."‡

What is a Permanent Clerk?

In 1802 the Assembly declared that "the business of former Assemblies has been impeded by the want of a Recording Clerk possessing that facility in the business which is acquired by experience," and "it is not to be expected that any one person should perform this service permanently without receiving an adequate compensation for his labor;" and therefore Resolved, "That a permanent Recording Clerk be chosen, whose duty it shall be from year to year to draught the minutes of the Assembly during their sessions, and afterward to perform such services respecting the transcribing, printing and distributing the extracts as shall be assigned to him from time to time; and that he be paid out of the funds of the Assembly three dollars per day for the time he shall be employed, as well during the sessions of the Assembly as after their dissolution." He shall be furnished with stationery, make the original draught of all the minutes, and "give certified copies as occasion may require of all such as may be proper to be transmitted to the Trustees of the General

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 270. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 283.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 96.

Assembly or any of their officers." After the adjournment he shall carefully revise the manuscript, render it correct and deliver it to the Stated Clerk. In 1870 the salary of the Permanent Clerk was fixed at $300 per annum and in 1895 at $500.* The Permanent Clerks of Presbyteries and Synods have similar duties. In the smaller Presbyteries they are not needed.

What is the Temporary Clerk?

When the Assembly in 1802 established the office of Permanent Clerk, it Resolved also, "That a Temporary Clerk be chosen by each Assembly, as heretofore, to read the minutes and communications to the Assembly, and otherwise aid the Permanent Clerk as occasion may require, and that he be paid one dollar per day for his services." From 1856 the N. S. Assembly chose two Temporary Clerks. In the O. S. Assembly the same custom prevailed. After the reunion three Temporary Clerks were found necessary, and since 1873 four have been yearly appointed.† (In the Presbyteries and Synods one or more Temporary Clerks are chosen at each meeting. Temporary Clerks receive generally no pecuniary compensation.) In 1880, however, the Assembly ordered that the Treasurer pay to them for their services the sum of twenty-five dollars each.‡

What is an acting Permanent Clerk?

One appointed by the court to perform the duties of the Permanent Clerk in the case of his absence or sickness. In 1881 the Assembly, hearing of the continued ill-health of the Permanent Clerk, Resolved, "That we appoint Rev. William H. Roberts acting Permanent

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 272.

† *Ibid.*, p. 272; *Minutes G. A. 1873*, p. 476; *1881*, p. 509.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 85.

Clerk for the coming year, assigning him the duties and the pay pertaining to the office." *

Who may be chosen Clerk?

He is usually, but not necessarily, a member of the judicatory.† In the General Assembly the Stated and the Permanent Clerks are often not commissioners. Not unfrequently Elders are appointed, especially as Temporary Clerks.‡ In 1858 the N. S. Assembly decided that the privileges of corresponding members be granted to their Stated and Permanent Clerks in matters pertaining to their official duties.§ Since the reunion these privileges have been accorded to them.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF VACANT CONGREGATIONS ASSEMBLING FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP.

What are the benefits to be expected from weekly assemblies of the people?

"*Considering the great importance of weekly assembling the people for the public worship of God, in order thereby to improve their knowledge, to confirm their habits of worship and their desire of the public ordinances, to augment their reverence for the most high God, and to promote the charitable affections which unite men most firmly in society.*"

Should vacant congregations hold such services?

"*It is recommended that every vacant congregation meet together on the Lord's Day, at one or more places, for the*

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 514.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 272. See p. 544.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

§ *New Digest*, p. 167.

purpose of prayer, singing praises and reading the Holy Scriptures, together with the works of such approved divines as the Presbytery, within whose bounds they are, may recommend and they may be able to procure." The Sessions of vacant churches should endeavor to obtain a Pastor as soon as possible,* and to obtain the services of a Minister on every Lord's Day. When this is not possible, regular services should be maintained. Services should also be, when practicable, on one or more days during the week, and a Sabbath-school should be established and maintained for the instruction of the young, under the direction of the Session.†

Who shall conduct these services?

"*That Elders or Deacons be the persons who shall preside and select portions of Scriptures and of the other books to be read, and to see that the whole be conducted in a becoming and orderly manner.*" These duties also devolve upon the Elders in the sickness or absence of the Pastor, when he is unable to procure the presence of another Minister.‡

May an Elder explain the Scriptures in the absence of the Pastor?

The O. S. Assembly in 1856 decided that the Presbytery of Louisiana was right in considering "it not inconsistent with the principles of our Church for Ruling Elders, in the absence of the Pastor, to read the Scriptures and explain them, and to endeavor to enforce the truth upon the conscience by suitable exhortations."§

What supervision should the Presbytery take over vacant churches?

The Presbytery should take special charge of its va-

* See p. 358. † See p. 55. ‡ See pp. 55, 80.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 587.

cant churches,* and should interrogate the Elders of such churches concerning their obedience to this chapter of the "Form of Government."† Elders should be utilized in conducting such services.‡ The Presbytery is officially the Pastor of every vacant church.§

CHAPTER XXII.

OF COMMISSIONERS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

I. Who are commissioners to the General Assembly?

They are the representatives of the Presbyteries and members of the General Assembly.

When are they elected?

"The commissioners to the General Assembly shall always be appointed by the Presbytery from which they come at its last stated meeting immediately preceding the meeting of the General Assembly; provided that there be a sufficient interval between that time and the meeting of the Assembly for the commissioners to attend to their duty in due season; otherwise the Presbytery shall make the appointment at any stated meeting not more than seven months preceding the meeting of the Assembly."

Can they be received without a formal election?

All irregularities must be reported to the Assembly by its Committee on Elections, and be judged by that body before the commissioner can take his seat. In the O. S. Assembly, Ministers and Ruling Elders were admitted when it was made evident that small or missionary Presbyteries designed to make the appointment, but failed to do so for want of a quorum at the spring meeting, and

* See pp. 217–220.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 587.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1888*, p. 60.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 588.

when, though the election had been made, the commission had been delayed, and when a missionary Presbytery had elected before the time prescribed by the constitution. Each case must be judged on its own merits, and therefore there is sometimes a real or apparent inconsistency in the decisions. In 1843 the Assembly refused to admit Rev. D. M. Smith. The Presbytery had failed to obtain a quorum; those present requested the Assembly to receive him, and two absent Ministers joined in the request. Yet, in 1865, Elder H. Smith was admitted on the request of several Ministers and Elders of a Presbytery which for two years had been unable to obtain a quorum. In 1892 the principal and alternate failed to appear, and R. Livingston was received on petition of a majority of his Presbytery.*

Can commissioners from newly-organized Presbyteries be received?

In 1822 the Assembly adopted as a standing rule that such commissioners must produce satisfactory evidence that their Presbyteries have been regularly organized according to the constitution, and are in connection with the General Assembly, and that they may furnish such evidence before the election of a Moderator. In 1837 it was further required that such Presbyteries must be duly reported by the Synod with which they are connected, and the same rule was applied to Presbyteries whose names have been changed. If the Assembly is convinced that any new Presbytery has been formed to increase unduly the representation, the Assembly may, on a majority vote, not only refuse to receive the commissioners, but require the Synod to reunite the new Presbytery to that to which it formerly belonged.†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 589. † *Ibid.*, p. 590.

What Elders may be elected?

Any Elder of the churches of the Presbytery may be elected Commissioner to the General Assembly, even if not a delegate to that meeting of Presbytery. But one who has been dismissed to another church cannot be elected.*

May a "Committee-man" be elected a commissioner?

The constitution requires that "the General Assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of Bishops and Elders from each Presbytery."† But under the "Plan of Union" Committee-men were admitted as members even of the General Assembly. But in 1832 the Assembly refused to recognize their election.‡

May a commissioner leave before the close of the Assembly?

In case of real necessity he may obtain permission to do so from the Committee of Leave of Absence. But the Assembly has repeatedly enjoined the Presbyteries to appoint "as commissioners those only who are able and willing to remain to the close of its sessions, to the end that all the work of the Assembly may be performed by all its members." Commissioners are required to make their arrangements to be present through the whole session of the Assembly, and to report of their fidelity in this matter, which should be recorded on the minutes of the Presbytery. The Clerk of the Assembly is required to notify the Presbyteries when their commissioners neglect their duties or leave without permission.§

What is meant by the "principal" and "alternate" commissioners?

The principal is the one elected to represent the Presbytery. "*And as much as possible to prevent all failure*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 595.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. ii. See p. 263.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 591. See p. 279. § *Ibid.*, p. 270. See p. 543.

in the representation of the Presbyteries, arising from unforeseen accidents to those first appointed, it may be expedient for each Presbytery, in the room of each commissioner, to appoint also an alternate commissioner to supply his place in case of necessary absence."

May a commissioner after taking his seat resign to his alternate?

This was permitted until 1827, when it was Resolved, "That in the judgment of this General Assembly the construction of the constitution ('Form of Government,' ch. xxii., sect. i.) which allows commissioners, after holding their seats for a time, to resign them to their alternates, or which allows alternates to sit for a while and then resign their places to their principals, is erroneous; that the practice growing out of this construction is inexpedient, and that it ought to be discontinued." The Assembly, has, however, several times, "under the peculiar circumstances of the case," permitted alternates to give up their seats to their principals, and the O. S. Assembly in one case at least allowed the principal to resign in favor of his alternate. These are exceptions "under peculiar circumstances," in which the judicatory may use its discretion. The reasons for the above decision should not be lightly laid aside. "The practice (of these changes) is thought to be derogatory to the dignity and usefulness of the General Assembly."* No change can be permitted during the hearing of a judicial case.

Does this rule apply to adjourned meetings?

An adjourned meeting is the continuation of the sessions of the same body; and, as in Presbyteries and Synods, so in the Assembly, an adjourned meeting should be composed of the same commissioners. This

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 592–594.

was the direction given by the N. S. Assembly when informing the Presbyteries that the two Assemblies would hold adjourned meetings at Pittsburg to consummate the reunion in the fall of 1869. The O. S. Assembly decided that all alternates whose principles were absent should be admitted, and so informed the other Assembly.*

II. How are commissioners to be certified?

"*Each commissioner, before his name shall be enrolled as a member of the Assembly, shall produce from his Presbytery a commission, under the hand of the Moderator and Clerk, in the following or like form, viz.:*"

"*The Presbytery of ———, being met at ——— on the -- day of ———, doth hereby appoint ———, Bishop of the congregation of ——— [or ———, Ruling Elder in the congregation of ———, as the case may be], (to which the Presbytery may, if they think proper, make a substitution in the following form), or in case of his absence, then ———, Bishop of the congregation of ——— [or ———, Ruling Elder in the congregation of ———, as the case may be], to be a commissioner on behalf of this Presbytery to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, to meet at ———, on the — day of ———, A. D. ——, or whenever the said Assembly may happen to sit; to consult, vote and determine on all things that may come before that body, according to the principles and constitution of this Church and the word of God. And of his diligence herein he is to render an account at his return.*"

"*Signed by order of the Presbytery,*

"———, *Moderator.* "———, *Clerk.*"

"*And the Presbytery shall make record of the appointment.*"†

* See p. 300.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 595.

This form should be used. A certificate of election is not a commission.*

What is the "Committee on Commissions"?

The General Assembly is opened by a sermon by the Moderator of the previous year, and is by him constituted with prayer. After which, according to the rules of organization adopted in 1826, the Moderator shall appoint a Committee on Commissions. The Assembly shall take a recess to afford time for the committee to examine the commissions of those claiming to be members. In the afternoon of the same day the committee shall report the names of those whose commissions are regular, and the roll is thus determined; and the Assembly shall be ready for business. In 1829 the Permanent and Stated Clerks were appointed a Standing Committee of Commissions, and it was determined that hereafter all commissions be handed to this committee on the morning of the day on which this Assembly opens, previous to eleven o'clock, and that any presented during the sessions of the Assembly be handed to this committee.†

What is the "Committee on Elections"?

After the Committee on Commissions has reported, those members whose commissions are approved take their seats, "and the first act of the Assembly, when thus ready for business, shall be the appointment of a Committee on Elections, whose duty it shall be to examine all informal and unconstitutional commissions, and to report on the same as soon as practicable." * It would seem that the report of this committee must be handed in and acted upon, and the roll of the Assembly thus completed, before the Moderator and Temporary Clerks could be

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 595.

† *Ibid.*, p. 260.

elected.* But at present the rule is to proceed with the election of the Moderator and Clerks after hearing the report of the Committee on Commissions, and the Committee of Elections is appointed by the new Moderator when he forms the standing committees.†

What irregularities are found in commissions?

1. No commission, but some testimony of appointment.
2. An extract from minutes, signed by the Stated Clerk.
3. A commission lacking proper signatures.
4. Without date.
5. Dated more than seven months before.
6. Not in due form.
7. From Presbyteries not reported by the Synods.
8. No commission, but satisfactory proof of the wish of a missionary Presbytery which could not meet for a formal election.
9. The commission lost or delayed in transmission. The usage is that where satisfactory evidence is given of the actual appointment of the commissioner his name is enrolled.‡
10. Too many commissioners are sent.

Can the Assembly go behind the commission?

In 1826 the Assembly was informed that one of its members was not an ordained Elder, but appointed, it was supposed, under the Plan of Union. The Assembly said, Every Presbytery must judge of the qualifications of its own members, and the Assembly can only take notice by way of appeal or reference or complaint. "It would be a dangerous precedent, and would lead to the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 260.
† See *Minutes of G. Assembly* since 1872.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 596.

destruction of all order in the Church of Christ, to permit unauthorized verbal testimony to set aside an authenticated written document." *

Who are to be rejected when a Presbytery sends more than its proportion of commissioners?

The O. S. Assembly decided that in such cases those last appointed should be rejected, their election being invalid and out of order.†

What other members of the Assembly are there?

The officers of the Assembly, the secretaries of the Boards and delegates from corresponding bodies are called corresponding members. Delegates from Union Presbyteries are called advisory members.*

III. How were the expenses of the commissioners to be met?

"*In order, as far as possible, to procure a respectable and full delegation to all of our judicatories, it is proper that the expenses of Ministers and Elders in their attendance on these judicatories be defrayed by the bodies which they respectively represent.*" In 1792 the Assembly ordered "that each Presbytery pay their own commissioners." In 1804 the Presbyteries of the Synod of New York and New Jersey and of the Synod of Philadelphia advised their churches to take an annual collection to aid in the payment of the expenses of commissioners from the more distant parts of the country, and that the money be paid to the persons who attend as commissioners, according to the direction of the Assembly.*

What was the Commissioners' Fund?

It originated from the above action. In 1806 and 1807 a more comprehensive plan was adopted, by which all the churches were urged to contribute annually to this Commissioners' Fund, and in 1833 a similar recommendation

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 597, 598. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 285.

was passed.* In 1801 Presbyteries were advised, in their settlements with their commissioners, to allow no compensation for services as members of the Assembly if they neglected their duty, were inattentive to the rules of decorum, abruptly left the Assembly or returned home without leave of absence. In 1818 it was required that the member entitled to draw from this fund make written and full application within three days after the appointment of the Committee on the Commissioners' Fund, or forfeit his portion of said fund. In 1827 it was ordered that if a commissioner obtained leave of absence within the first six days of the session of the Assembly, he shall receive no part of the fund, save by the order of the Assembly. And in 1833 Presbyteries not contributing to this fund were declared not entitled to draw from it for their commissioners; and certain other Presbyteries were permitted to draw only the amount which they had respectively paid in.†

What was the Committee on Mileage?

The money contributed to the Commissioners' Fund was placed in the hands of a Committee on Mileage, and distributed to those commissioners who claimed it in conformity with the above decision, according to the number of miles traveled by each to the place of meeting. This seems to have been the usage before the division, and afterward in both Assemblies. The N. S. Assembly in 1856 proposed to the Presbyteries an addition to the constitution on this subject, but a majority of the Presbyteries took no action. In 1857 the following recommendations were adopted: Presbyteries were urged to contribute annually their full proportion, which shall be determined

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 598.

† *New Digest*, pp. 174, 179; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 299.

by the number of communicants, and apportioned among the churches as the Presbyteries think best. The Standing Committee on Mileage shall report the amount needed for the traveling expenses of the commissioners and the expenses of the next Assembly, and the rate that will be adequate. Before the fourth day of the session the amount contributed shall be paid to the Committee on Mileage, and each commissioner shall present his bill for necessary traveling expenses and mileage. These bills shall be paid as far as possible, after deducting from the fund the expenses of the Assembly. Only those commissioners can apply whose Presbyteries have sent their full proportion to the fund. Each Minister and vacant church of Presbyteries contributing the full quota shall receive a copy of the Minutes. The rate for the year 1858 was five cents for each communicant.*

What plan was adopted at the reunion?

The same plan was adopted at the reunion, except that the bills of commissioners must be handed to the committee before the fifth day (instead of the fourth),† and that commissioners from Presbyteries in foreign lands shall receive their necessary traveling expenses *pro rata* from their place of residence in this country. The assessment for the Commissioners' and Contingent Funds for 1871 was fixed at six cents per communicant. In 1890 it was, including mileage and entertainment, seven cents. In 1873 it was found that this plan was acceptable and worked well. Out of 158 Presbyteries—which number includes a part of the freedmen and foreign Presbyteries—not one failed to pay the full assessment, and all the claims for mileage were fully met.‡

* *New Digest*, pp. 181–184; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 599.

† See p. 558. ‡ *Pres. Dig.*, p. 599; *Minutes G. A. 1890*, p. 92.

In 1875 the commissioners were required hereafter to present their bills as early as the fourth day of the session. The Assembly further explained that "it is understood that commissioners, both in coming to and returning from the Assembly, will avail themselves of any commutation of fares that may be offered in season, and that in other cases they are to take, when practicable, the most economical route; no allowance to be made for extra accommodations on the way. Also, that no one will charge for return expenses unless he intends to go back to his field of labor, and that no one on a business-tour or excursion of pleasure will make a convenience of the meeting of the Assembly and expect payment for his traveling expenses from the Mileage Fund." The Committee of Arrangements for the respective Assemblies shall early announce (not later, if practicable, than the first week of May) what arrangements have been made for commutation of railroad and steamboat fares.*

What is "the Supplemental Contingent Expense Fund"?

Since the reunion the Assembly has been so large a body, and with so much business to transact, that the invitations to entertain it have been very few. Various plans have been proposed for decreasing the size of the Assembly by a change in the representation,† but these have been rejected by the Presbyteries. In 1877, with a view to immediate relief in the difficulties attending the entertainment of the Assembly, it was Resolved, "That in addition to the mileage assessment the Presbyteries be instructed to forward yearly an assessment of two cents per church-member to the Treasurer of the Assembly, to constitute a Supplemental Contingent Ex-

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 469; *1878*, p. 227; *1879*, p. 607.

† See p. 264. *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 600.

pense Fund. This fund shall be disbursed from year to year by the Committee of Arrangements, and be used for the purpose of meeting the expense of entertaining such commissioners as are not otherwise provided for; and that the Treasurer be authorized to pay the account of the Committee of Arrangements after it has been approved by the Finance Committee of the Assembly."*

The appointment for 1899 will be for the Mileage Fund one and a half cents, the Entertainment Fund one cent, and the Contingent Fund one and a half cents per communicant.†

Has a church court the power to assess churches?

"None of our church courts are clothed with power to assess a tax upon the churches. Apportionments to meet the expenses of the several bodies may be made, but the payment depends upon that voluntary liberality which flows from the enlightened consciences of the people, who may confidently be relied upon to return whatever is necessary for the conduct of our ecclesiastical business." If the Presbyteries choose to pay only the expenses of their own commissioners, "the Assembly cannot require them to contribute to the general fund." Yet "each Presbytery is hereby earnestly requested to contribute annually its full proportion for the Commissioners' and Contingent Funds of the General Assembly."‡

Can a claim for mileage be made after the adjournment of the General Assembly?

The Assembly only can act upon such a claim. In 1878 a commissioner from the Presbytery of Santa Fé, who had been in the previous Assembly, presented a claim for $154 due him since last year from the Mileage

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 600. † *Minutes G. A. 1898*, p. 135.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1878*, pp. 67, 68.

Fund, and the Assembly instructed the Treasurer to pay it."* In 1897 he was authorized to pay at his discretion additional sums justly due for travel.†

What is done with the balances of the Mileage and Entertainment Funds?

The balances of the Mileage Fund and of the Entertainment Fund are paid to the Treasurer of the General Assembly, and go to the account of the next year.‡

Do commissioners receive the printed Minutes?

"Every Minister and every vacant church contributing to this fund (Mileage Fund) connected with the Presbyteries, thus complying with the provisions of this plan, shall be entitled to a copy of the annual Minutes of the General Assembly."§ In 1880 the Assembly Resolved, "That the Stated Clerk forward a copy of the printed Minutes to every Elder who is a commissioner in this Assembly, provided he forwards his P. O. address, and that the Presbytery which he represents has paid its quota to the Mileage Fund."‖ Clerks of Session may obtain them at 50 cents per copy.¶

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF AMENDMENTS.

See pages 297–299. This chapter was enacted by the Assembly in 1891 and made part of the Constitution.

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 100.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 601.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 73.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 599.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 85.
¶ *Ibid., 1897*, p. 120.

CONSTITUTIONAL RULE NO 1.

Of Local Evangelists.

"*It shall be lawful for Presbytery, after proper examination as to his piety, knowledge of Scripture and ability to teach, to license as a local evangelist any male member of the Church who, in the judgment of the Presbytery, is qualified to preach the Gospel publicly, and who is willing to engage in such service under direction of Presbytery. Such license shall be valid for one year unless renewed, and such licensed evangelist shall report to the Presbytery at least once each year, and his license may be withdrawn at any time at the pleasure of Presbytery. The person securing such a license shall not be ordained to the Gospel ministry, should he desire to enter it, until he shall have served at least four years as a local evangelist, and shall have pursued and been examined upon what would be equivalent to a three years' course of study in Theology, Homilectics, Church History, Church Polity, and the English Bible, under the direction of Presbytery.*"

This was adopted in 1893 and made part of the laws of the Presbyterian Church.* See page 354. The above rule is general in its application. The four years of service as a local evangelist date from his licensure.† The English Bible in the Rule means the accepted translation of the Bible into the vernacular of the people.‡ The local evangelist is not exempted from the necessity of formal licensure prior to ordination, should he desire to enter the Ministry.§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 330.
† *Ibid.*, p. 559.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1897*, p. 132.
§ *Ibid., 1898*, p. 130.

CONSTITUTIONAL RULE NO. 2.

Examination in the English Bible.

"Candidates for licensure, in addition to the examination required by Chapter XIV., Section IV. of the Form of Government, shall be diligently examined in the English Bible, and shall be required to exhibit a good knowledge of its contents and of the relation of its parts and portions to each other."

This was adopted in 1897 and made part of the laws of the Presbyterian Church. See page 349.*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 331.

CHAPTER VI.—In the Directory for Worship.

Of the Worship of God by Offerings.

This chapter was added to the Constitution in 1886:*

I. In order that every member of the congregation may be trained to give of his substance systematically and as the Lord has prospered him, to promote the preaching of the Gospel in all the world and to every creature, according to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is proper and very desirable that an opportunity be given for offerings by the congregations in this behalf every Lord's day, and that, in accordance with the Scriptures, the bringing of such offerings be performed as a solemn act of worship to Almighty God.

II. The proper order, both as to the particular service of the day and the place in such service for receiving the offerings, may be left to the discretion of the Minister and Session of the church, but that it should be a separate and specific act of worship the Minister should either precede or immediately follow the same with a prayer invoking the blessing of God upon it and devoting the offerings to his service.

III. The offerings received may be apportioned among the Boards of the Church and among other benevolent objects under the supervision of the church Session, in such proportion and on such general plan as may from time to time be determined; but the specific designation by the giver of any offering to any cause or causes shall always be respected and the will of the donor carefully carried out.

IV. It is the duty of every Minister to cultivate the grace of liberal giving in his congregation, that every

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 840.

member thereof may offer according to his ability, whether it be much or little."

In 1887 and often since the Assembly has urged the plan of weekly proportional giving as an act of worship, and the system of individual pledges to the Boards of the Church. It has further recommended that all Synods and Presbyteries appoint Committees on Beneficence which shall co-operate with the Assembly's Committee. Presbyteries should annually inquire if their churches have complied with the recommendation of the Assembly. It is inconsistent with our Church government for a minister or Session to interfere with the collections ordered by the Assembly. The people have a right to the opportunity of contributing. Combination collections for the congregational expenses and for the Boards are discouraged, so also are fairs and suppers. There should be a public announcement to the congregation of the amount and disposition of the contributions.*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 840–843. See p. 521.

In 1895 the following new chapter of the Book of Discipline was adopted and made part of the Constitution.*

"CHAPTER XIV.—OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JUDICATORIES.

"121. Any judicatory, deeming itself aggrieved by the action of any other judicatory of the same rank, may present a memorial to the judicatory immediately superior to the judicatory charged with the grievance, and to which the latter judicatory is subject, after the manner prescribed in the sub-chapter on Complaints (Sections 83–93, Book of Discipline), save only that with regard to the limitation of time notice of said memorial shall be lodged with the Stated Clerks, both of the judicatory charged with the grievance and of its next superior judicatory, within one year from the commission of the said alleged grievance.

"122. When any judicatory deems itself aggrieved by another judicatory, and determines to present a memorial as provided for in the preceding section, it shall appoint a Committee to conduct the case in all its stages, in whatever judicatory, until the final issue be reached.

"123. The judicatory with which the memorial is lodged, if it sustain the same, may reverse in whole or in part the matter of grievance, and shall direct the lower judicatory how to dispose of the case, and may enforce its orders. Either party may appeal to the next higher judicatory, except as limited by Chap. xi., Sec. 4, of the Form of Government."*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 805.

INCREASE OF THE MINISTRY.

A committee appointed in 1889 to consider the increase of the Ministry presented a report the next year, which was referred to the Assembly of 1891, and then adopted, and is in brief as follows:*

1. The Assembly is constrained to do all in its power to meet the necessity, immediate and vital to the Church, of increasing its Ministry.

2. "The Presbytery is officially the pastor of every vacant church within its bounds," and should provide for its spiritual necessities; should group small churches or place them under the ministrations of an adjacent Pastor; or "it may bring in the service of intelligent Elders, competent to teach and counsel and willing to be engaged in such oversight."

3. In the reception of Ministers from other bodies the Assembly hereby adopts the following rule for the guidance of the Presbyteries: "When application is made by a Minister of another Church for admission to Presbytery, Presbytery shall inquire concerning his character, his education and professional training, the fact of his ordination, his ministerial standing in the body to which he belongs and the motives which lead him to apply for admission to Presbytery. If this inquiry shall prove satisfactory, Presbytery may place his name on its roll. All applicants from other bodies shall be required, previous to the enrollment, to give their assent in a public session of Presbytery to the first seven questions prescribed in the Form of Government for ordination, but should the applicant not possess the same educational qualifications for ordination as those prescribed in our

* *Minutes G. A. 1891*, pp. 167–178.

Standards, he shall not be enrolled as a member of Presbytery until at least six months after his application shall have been presented to Presbytery. He may be permitted to labor, in the interval, within the bounds of Presbytery.

4. In respect to the "extraordinary cases" provided for in our Form of Government, chapter xiv., section 6, great caution should be exercised by Presbyteries. When a full collegiate course is impracticable, the student should be required to pursue a full course of three years in some theological seminary, which should be preceded by at least one year of special preparatory training. He should not be less than twenty-five years of age, but with special promise of usefulness and of approved piety, having a fair education, and so circumstanced that he can study whatever the Presbytery may prescribe. The seminaries are advised to provide suitable courses for such students in which the full period of three years may be profitable, and are authorized to receive such students when duly approved by the Presbyteries. Presbyteries are required to record fully their action, and send this record to the institution where such students are received.

5. The following rules were adopted for the Board of Education: (*a*) The Board is authorized to aid students in their academic course who are under care of, and recommended by, Presbytery. (*b*) The Board is authorized to aid "extraordinary cases" when certified that they have conformed to the standard herein prescribed. (*c*) The Board is instructed to confer with the seminaries to secure substantial equality of aid provided from all public sources for the students; the maximum of aid received should not be more than $200 per year, except in the case of honorary scholarships.

6. The churches are urged to the immediate larger equipment and constant patronage of our own denominational colleges.

7. The Board of Education is urged to devise measures to bring this great interest of our Church more directly before the young men in our various institutions of learning, sending representatives, especially Pastors, to every Presbyterian college to press the claim of the ministry upon the teachers and pupils.*

PLAN OF MINISTERIAL ADJUSTMENT.

A committee on unemployed Ministers and vacant churches in 1890 reported six Resolutions, which were adopted, on (1) *Concert of action of the whole Church*; (2) *A medium of communication* between Ministers and vacant churches; (3) *A permanent committee* with a Corresponding Secretary; (4) *An annual report to the Assembly*; (5) *The episcopal powers of Presbytery*; and (6) *An annual offering* to the Presbyterian Adjustment Fund. They proposed a plan of vacancy and adjustment.† This was sent as an overture to the Presbyteries in 1892, but was rejected.‡

CONTROL OVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

A committee was appointed in 1892 on this subject. Their report was adopted in 1894, and included the following resolutions:§

First. That each and all of the seminaries of the Church be requested to secure, at the earliest moment practicable, such changes in their charters or amendments thereto as will provide—

(*a*) That all their funds and property subject to the

* *Minutes G. A. 1891*, pp. 167–178. † *Ibid., 1890*, p. 157.
‡ *Ibid., 1892*, p. 215; *1893*, p. 203. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 417.

terms and conditions of existing or specific trusts shall be declared to be held by them in trust for the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, for the purpose of theological education according to the Standards of said Church, and that no part of the funds and property so held in trust shall be used for any other purpose than for theological education in the doctrines set forth in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

(*b*) That the election of the Trustees, Directors or Commissioners, or whatever the bodies governing the teaching or property shall be named, shall be subject to the approval of the next succeeding General Assembly, and that no election shall take effect until approved by the General Assembly; failure of the General Assembly, to which said elections are reported for approval, to act thereon shall be regarded as approval of said elections.

(*c*) That the election, appointment or transfer of all professors and teachers in all seminaries shall be submitted to the next succeeding General Assembly for its approval, and that no such election, appointment or transfer shall take effect, nor shall any professor or teacher be inducted into office, until his election, appointment or transfer shall have been approved by the said General Assembly; failure of the General Assembly, to which the said elections, appointments or transfers are reported for approval, to act thereon shall be regarded as approval thereof; and that all of said professors and teachers shall be either ministers or members in good standing of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

(*d*) That in the event of the violation of any of the terms of said amendments, or the misuse or the diversion

of the funds or property held by them, then the General Assembly shall be empowered to provide against such violation of the provisions of said charters, and for the enforcement of the same and for the protection of the trusts on which said property and funds are held, in such manner, and in the name of such person or corporation, as it may direct by resolution certified by its Clerk, in any civil court having jurisdiction over the corporations whose charters are so amended.

Second. That all seminaries hereafter established or organized shall contain in their charters the foregoing provisions as an essential part thereof, before they shall be recognized as in connection with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Third. That the General Assembly, having adopted the foregoing resolutions, shall appoint a Committee of fifteen persons to confer with the various seminaries, with a view to securing their approval of said resolutions, and their consent to said changes in their charters, and for the purpose of aiding them by counsel and otherwise in securing the necessary changes and amendments to the respective charters herein recommended; it being understood that the adoption of said resolutions is without impairment of any of the rights of the General Assembly or of said seminaries, that may have accrued by the compact of 1870; and said Committee to make report to the next General Assembly for final action on this whole subject by the Assembly.

This was explained the next year as not intended in any way to change the tenure or management of the property nor to affect the autonomy of the Seminaries.* In 1896 the Committee reported that in its judgment

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 420.

the plan approved by the Assembly of 1895 should be substantially adopted by all the Seminaries. Some, however, have not seen their way clear as yet to adopt the general provisions and carry them into legal effect. They were urged to take such measures as will secure the results desired, and to report next year what progress they have made. In 1897 the Assembly accepted the written and repeated declaration that these Seminaries were loyal to the Church and that their teaching and properties were fully safeguarded to the General Assembly. The whole church would be gratified if the proposed changes could be made.*

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES.

The subject of Young People's Societies has often been before the Assembly. In 1891 the great religious interest of our young people was recognized, and their associations were commended to the loving sympathy and oversight of pastors and Sessions. Presbyteries were recommended to appoint permanent committees to co-operate with them.† In 1892 a special committee was appointed, which the next year reported. The following resolutions, in brief, were approved:

1. The Assembly commends the spirit and purpose manifested in the organization of Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavor, Westminister Leagues and other similar organizations, and urges Ministers and Elders to be diligent in directing these societies.

2. The youth of our churches are counseled to formally recognize in their constitutions their relation to the Church and subjection to its constituted authorities, and to provide for the study of the doctrines, polity, history and present activities of our Church.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 420, 421. † *Ibid.*, p. 164.

3. These societies are urged to inform themselves as to Boards of our own Church, and to sustain them.

4. The Board of Publication is called to provide a literature for the Young People's Societies.

5. Presbyteries are recommended to encourage the formation of Presbyterial organizations of young people.

The following Model Constitution was suggested as suitable for such Presbyterial organizations:

"MODEL CONSTITUTION.

"*Article 1.* This organization shall be called the Young People's Union of the Presbytery of———.

"*Article 2.* All members of Young People's Societies in churches, missions, or Sabbath-schools belonging to the Presbytery of——— may be enrolled as members of this Society.

"*Article 3.* The object is to promote and extend the special work of Young People's Societies within the bounds of Presbytery, and to bring these societies into such relation to the Presbytery as shall enable Presbytery to give counsel and help.

"*Article 4.* The officers shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. These shall be chosen at the annual meeting, and shall perform the usual functions of such offices. They shall constitute the Executive Committee, and as such shall act in concert with the Presbytery's Committee on Young People's Societies, and arrange for all public meetings of the Union.

"*Article 5.* This organization is not independent, but is a part of the Church and subject to the directions of Presbytery.

"*Article 6.* An annual meeting for the election of officers and other business shall be held on the——day

of——; other business or public meetings may be called from time to time.

"*Article 7.* This constitution may be amended at any annual meeting by a majority vote, subject to approval of Presbytery."

"This constitution may be taken either as a model or as a suggestion. Those familiar with the necessities of the field in each Presbytery may see the need of amendments to the constitution before it fully meets their requirements. Others will find it sufficient to supplement it by a body of by-laws." *

In 1896 the Assembly adopted a statement of the relation of the Y. P. Societies to the Church. In general these societies are organized in conformity with the historical position of our Church, in reference to *a*, the Word of God as the infallible rule of faith and practice; *b*, the honor due to the Holy Spirit in developing Christian life; *c*, the authority and scope of Church vows; *d*, the chief means of growth in grace are the ordinances of the Sanctuary; *e*, the separation of the Church, including Y. P. Societies, from all political creeds and action. And in particular each Society is under the direction and oversight of the Session—as regards *a*, its constitution; *b*, the schedule of its services; *c*, in the election of its officers, who should be approved by the Session; and *d*, in the distribution of its funds, that the Boards of the church be not neglected.†

* *Minutes G. A. 1893*, pp. 124–128.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 164–166.

INDEX.

Abington Presbytery, 285.
Abolition of Slavery, 486–489, 492–494.
Absence:
  of accused, 136, 159, 224.
  of appellant, 197.
  leave of, 537, 550.
  of records, 195, 229, 258.
Absentees:
  censured, 159.
  from church courts, 167, 185, 216, 252, 257, 543.
  from church services, 152, 307.
  from communion, 155.
  for a long time, 146, 152.
  recorded, 258.
  residence unknown, 152, 307.
  rights of, 154, 307.
  willful, 152.
Abstinence, total, 510.
Accused, 135, 159, 222.
  absence of, 136, 159, 224.
  cited, 113, 135.
  counsel of, 136, 225.
  rights of, 138, 139.
  self-, 135.
Accuser, 223, 537, 538.
  of a communicant, 135, 138.
  of a Minister, 222.
Acting Ruling Elder, 58, 184, 317.
Adjourned meetings:
  of General Assembly, 299, 555.
  of Presbytery, 185, 238, 555.
  of Synod, 247, 555.
Adjournment:
  of General Assembly, 303, 538.
  of Presbytery, 240, 538.
  of Session, 176.
  of Synod, 257, 538.
Administration of sacraments, 85–93.
Admission:
  to church, 85, 139–145.
  to communion, 90, 139, 144.
Admission:
  to Presbytery, 210.
Admonition, 122, 159.
  to accuser, 223.
  to court, 132, 193, 437.
Adopting act, 17.
Adoption of standards, 17, 19, 24, 25, 312, 379.
Adsessor, 543.
Adult baptism, 85, 87, 139, 143.
Adultery, 101.
Advisory Committee of Home Missions, 425.
Advisory Members of G. Assembly, 184, 265.
Affinity:
  elective courts, 182.
  marriage, 102–105.
Africa: missions in, 486.
African Fund, 487.
Agreement of parties, 197, 226, 253, 395, 396, 404.
Aid:
  to Candidates, 327, 330–337, 430, 438–441, 456, 571.
  to chapels, 187, 478.
  to churches, 411–414, 473–479, 499–506.
  to colleges, 338, 441, 472, 489, 506–509.
  to Ministers, 486, 499–506.
  to schools, 436, 478, 489–498.
  to widows of Ministers, 480–485
  to women, 485.
Allahabad College, 472.
Alliance:
  Evangelical, 96, 282.
  Presbyterian, 281–284.
Alternates, 184, 300, 554–556.
Ambassador, 45.
Amendments:
  to constitution, 19, 294–299.
  to motions, 533.

American:
Baptist Missionary Union, 467.
Bible Society, 444.
B. C. F. M., 465, 468.
College and Education Society, 439.
Colonization Society, 487.
Education Society, 438.
Home Missionary Society, 420.
and Church Extension, 422.
Temperance Society, 510.
Tract Society, 446.
Annual collections, 64, 111, 500, 515–521.
Annuity and Life Insurance Company, 481.
Apostles, 41.
gifts of, 42, 180.
successors to, 43, 180.
Apostolic churches, 11, 44, 53, 61, 118, 177, 191.
Appeals, 190–201.
absence of records in, 195, 197.
appellant in, 192.
before commission, 196, 253, 270.
and complaints, 190.
conditions of, 192.
from congregational meeting, 165.
decision of, 191, 198, 251.
under Plan of Union, 278.
and decision of civil court, 197.
dismissed, 197.
effect of, 193, 251.
final, 251, 260, 268.
in General Assembly, 268.
heard, 193, 253.
inferior court in, 195.
informalities in, 192, 197, 251, 257.
limitation of time in, 192.
from the Moderator, 537.
of congregational meeting, 129, 165.
notice, 192.
original parties in, 193.
in other churches, 191, 199.
in Presbytery, 190–199.
records read in, 194.
absent, 195, 197.
and references, 190.
retirement of parties in, 196.
right of, 191.
in Synod, 251–254.
vote taken on, 194–199.
voters in, 199.
to what court, 165, 192, 268.
Appellant, 190.
absence of, 197.
notice by, 193.
rights of, 194.
spirit of, 192, 226.
Application:
for aid. See Boards.
for membership in church, 85, 139–145.
in Presbytery, 210–213.
Apprentices, baptism of, 85.
Appropriations. See Boards.
Approval:
of overtures, 294–299.
of records, 172–174, 229, 258.
Ashmun Institute, 341, 489.
Assembly Herald, 414.
Assess, power to, 559.
Assessment:
mileage, 557.
supplemental contingent expenses, 558.
Assessor, 541.
Assistant Pastor, 49, 131.
Associations, 202, 265, 389.
Attendance:
on church courts, 167, 184, 265, 543, 550.
expenses of, 555.
of commissioners, 265, 543, 550.
Attestation of replies from Presbyteries, 299.
Auburn Theological Seminary, 340.
Auction of pews, 373.
Authority:
of the Church, 24, 27, 120, 124.
of the constitution, 19, 24, 354, 378, 527.
of courts, 27, 120, 191.
of General Assembly, 267, 271–279.
of Moderator, 525–527, 531.
of officers, 25, 45, 52, 120.
of records, O. S. and N. S., 281
of Scripture, 27, 344, 451.
of state, 18, 23, 120, 197.

Bans, 107.
Baptism, 82–89, 143.
administered by whom, 83.
adult, 85, 87, 139, 143.
and circumcision, 83.
efficacy of, 84.
and excommunication, 89.
half-way covenant, 88.
infant, 85–87, 141.

Baptism:
lay, 85.
mode of, 89.
in other churches, 83, 84, 88.
private, 90.
on profession of faith, 85, 87, 139, 143.
not recognized, 84.
Romish, 84, 85.
sponsors in, 88.
subjects of, 85, 86.
Baptist Church, 158, 203, 390.
missions, 460, 467.
Baptized members, 113, 141, 146.
and Catechism, 108, 109.
discipline of, 113, 136.
dismissed, 146.
instruction of, 108.
and parents, 108.
responsible to Session, 108, 113
rights of, 56.
roll of, 174.
and Sabbath-schools, 109.
witnesses, 137.
Benediction, 47, 117.
Benevolence, 515–521.
Bible:
authority of, 27, 344, 346, 451.
correspondence school, 549.
distribution, 443.
English, 346, 349, 565.
imprints of, 443.
Mohegan, 460.
publication of, 443.
revision of, 445.
in Sabbath-school, 163.
societies, 444.
Biddle University, 342, 490.
Bigamy, 99, 101, 105.
Bishops, 45, 52.
in other churches, 43, 46, 180, 199, 205.
Blackburn University, 341.
Blanks for reports, 175, 235, 236, 521.
Bluffton Institute, 497.
Board, A. B. C. F. M., 465, 468.
Am. Home M., 420.
and church extension, 432.
Board of Aid for Colleges, 441, 506.
Board of Deacons, 70.
Board of Education, 329, 430–442.
applications to, 330–337.
appropriations of, 330–337.
and Candidates, 329–337.
and colleges, 441.
committees on, 439, 441.
Board of Education:
early measures, 329, 430.
and freedmen, 491.
functions of, 441.
and parochial schools, 436–438.
and Presbyteries, 330.
scholarships of, 333, 334.
and seminaries, 329–347, 571.
Board of Church Erection, 473-479.
applications to, 477.
and chapels and schools, 478.
and manses, 515.
Board of Church Extension, 475.
Board of Missions, 418, 420, 425, 468, 469.
and Church Extension, 418.
and common Board of Agency, 420.
Board of Missions, Domestic, 425.
early measures, 111, 415–418, 486–488.
Board of Missions, Freedmen, 498.
women's department of, 499.
Board of Missions, Home, 415–430.
applications to, 426.
and Church Extension Committee, 423.
committees of, 421–425.
departments of, 494, 501.
and Committee on Freedmen, 495.
and Missionaries, 413, 428.
and sustentation, 501.
women's, 428–430.
Board of Missions, Foreign, 459–473.
Chinese, 464.
committee of, 471.
early measures, 459, 461–463, 467.
and education, 472.
Indians, 464.
of other churches, 459, 467.
women's, 472, 473.
Board of Publication, 442–459.
colporteurs of, 455–458.
committee of, 447.
departments of, 451–455.
depositories of, 451.
early measures, 442, 447.
Missionaries of, 455–458.
and Sabbath-school literature, 163, 447, 451, 457.
and Sabbath-school work, 163, 456–459.
superintendents of, 456.
Trustees of, 482.

Board of Relief, 480–486.
applications to, 484.
early measures, 480–482.
Home, 485.
permanent fund of, 483.
and women, 485.
Board of Trustees:
of Church, 38.
of General Assembly, 482.
of Presbytery, 39, 479.
Boards, 415–499.
anticipated, 418.
collections for, 111, 515–521.
and committees, 419.
and General Assembly, 255, 419.
origin of, 417.
powers of, 419.
and Presbyteries, 422, 427.
reports of, 419.
secretaries of, 52, 265, 393.
and Session, 112, 520.
and Synod, 252, 517.
women's, 428, 472, 499.
Bohemian church government, 12.
Bond of Union, 177–181.
Book of Church Order, 33.
Book of Common Order, 12.
Book of Discipline, First and Second, 12.
Book of Discipline:
adopted, 299.
amended, 19, 20, 295–299.
revised, 295–299.
Book of records:
of congregations, 165, 367.
of Deacons, 70.
of judicatories, 170, 235, 257, 543.
Book and tract distribution, 442–457.
Books:
character of, 442, 448, 451.
Sabbath-school and Session, 162, 458.
Boundaries:
of Presbyteries, 182, 184, 252.
of Synods, 243–246, 272.
Brainerd Institute, 497.
British ancient Church, 12.
Bureau for unemployed Ministers, 217.

Call of Meetings. See Meetings.
Call to church office, 308.
to the ministry, 324.
Call of Pastor, 209, 368.
Call of Pastor:
approved, 377.
a contract, 206, 368–374.
disapproved, 209, 377.
and installation, 375.
made out, 362–370.
in other churches, 364, 387–392.
placed in hands, 374, 396.
prosecuted, 376, 393–397.
and salary of former Pastor, 378.
signed, 374.
voters of, 365.
Call of Professors and Secretaries, 342, 393.
Calvin and church government, 12.
and Foreign Missions, 459.
Campbellites, 84, 206, 286.
Candidates for Ministry, 201, 323, 352.
application for aid, 330–337.
colored, 348, 352, 489.
dismissed, 214.
duties of, 337–347.
and English Bible, 346, 349, 565.
and Board of Education, 330–337.
employed, 323, 359.
examined, 201, 326, 349, 387.
foreign, 336.
German, 336.
licensed, 326, 347, 353.
from other churches, 206.
in other churches, 202, 387–392.
and Missions, 335.
preaching, 353.
and Presbytery, 201, 326, 339, 347, 355.
and Professors, 332.
qualifications of, 326–328.
received, 201, 326.
responsible, 116, 133, 201, 326, 328, 333, 355.
and seminaries, 332, 339, 340, 342, 347, 352.
Spanish, 336.
and standards, 337, 347, 354, 379.
study, 338–342.
transferred, 347, 356.
women, 325.
Candidate for Pastor, 359.
called, 208, 359–374, 393.
Moderator, 130.
ordained and installed, 375, 381–390.
in other churches, 364.
procured, 359–361.
who may be, 359.

Candidating, 359.
Card-playing, 141.
Cases without process, 152–156, 159, 193, 216, 225.
Casting vote, 526, 531.
Catechism, 14, 19, 108, 337.
and constitution, 19, 295, 354, 378.
taught, 108, 109, 163, 350.
Heidelberg, 108.
Catechists, 110.
Catechising, 109, 110.
Catechumen, 111.
Catholic Apostolic Church, 204.
Catholic, R., schools, 23, 134, 442.
Caution in receiving charges, 222.
Censure, 159.
on absent person, 159.
for contumacy, 136, 137, 224.
on courts, 240, 273, 494.
degrees of, 122, 159, 227.
inflicted, 132.
removed, 123, 228.
Centennial of General Assembly, 263.
Centennial of Independence, 524.
Centennial of Temperance, 512.
Central Am. Educational Society, 440.
Certificate:
of credence, 151.
of dismission, 142, 144, 149, 309, 314.
of license, 355.
to Minister, 210, 214.
qualified, 144, 150, 212.
of reception, 150.
returned, 115.
Chairmen of committees, 525, 532.
Change in constitution, 294–299.
Change of time and place, 248.
Chanting, 78.
Chapels, 187, 478.
Chaplains, 51.
Charges against:
communicants, 115, 135, 138.
judicatories, 273.
Ministers, 210, 222–228.
Charges at ordination, 313, 385, 400.
Charges, pastoral and mission, 500, 502.
Charters, 36–39, 479, 498.
Cheap Repository Tracts, 446.
Children, 138.
baptized, 85–87.
and communion, 91, 141
consecrated, 324.
Children:
day, 97.
disciplined, 113.
instructed, 108–134, 406, 442, 457, 496.
in R. C. schools, 23, 134, 442.
and Session, 109, 134, 162, 173, 442.
Chinese, 464.
Choir, 76.
Christians, 286.
Church, 9, 23, 28, 29, 119.
Baptist, 158, 203, 390.
collected, 41.
Congregational, 10, 160, 181, 389.
courts, 117–126, 179.
attendance upon, 167, 184, 263, 543, 550, 555.
and Deacons, 69.
disciplined, 194, 252, 273, 494.
fallibility of, 27, 178.
of other churches, 160, 199–201, 203.
power of, 120, 178.
on Sabbath, 247.
creeds, 379.
Episcopal, 9, 46, 156, 160, 180, 202, 387.
Reformed, 157, 204.
erection, 473–479.
extension, 421–424, 473–475.
fallibility of, 24, 178.
government, 9, 12, 117–126, 177–181.
in early Church, 12, 44, 118.
kinds of, 9–12.
necessity of, 30, 117.
origin of, 11, 14, 118.
under Plan of Union, 277–279.
Presbyterian, 10, 22, 44, 118, 179, 260.
right to determine, 23, 118
uniformity of, 178.
head of, 9, 28.
Lutheran, 158, 203.
membership of, 9, 23, 29, 142.
Methodist, 160, 181, 391.
officers, 25, 41–71, 322.
origin of, 28, 41.
particular, 29, 30.
call Pastor, 362–369.
charter of, 36–39.
cited, 195.

Church, particular:
colored, 492, 496, 498.
and congregation, 35–39.
creeds, 142, 178.
dismissed and received, 234.
dissolved and divided, 148, 233.
extinct, 115, 233.
and General Assembly, 274.
grievances, 406–409.
imperfectly organized, 34, 280.
income of, 372–374.
members of:
baptized, 113, 141, 146.
communing. See COMMUNICANTS.
object of, 30.
officers of. See RULING ELDER and DEACON.
ordinances of, 71–117.
how organized, 30–35, 232.
and Pastor, 186, 359–410.
Presbyterian:
first, in America, 14, 15.
and Presbytery, 30–35, 186.
beyond Presbytery, 31, 33, 50, 184, 386.
property of, 36–41, 162.
represented in judicatories, 181–188.
received, 234.
and rotary eldership, 317–323.
and society, 37.
Trustees of, 38–41.
vacant, 127, 131, 187, 218–220.
visited, 231.
withdraw, 221, 234.
power, 27, 120, 124, 178.
Presbyterian, 10–27, 44, 118, 179, 261.
Romish, 9, 43, 46, 85, 181.
and State, 18, 23, 120.
unity of, 29, 119, 178.
Church at home and abroad, 414.
Churches:
collegiate, 132, 186.
extinct, 115, 148.
first, 191.
in foreign lands, 55, 466, 471.
and General Assembly, 274.
imperfectly organized, 34, 280.
mission, 187, 233.
mixed, 278.
Churches:
nationality of, 236.
other recognized, 9, 23, 29, 119, 206, 274.
under Plan of Union, 277–279.
united, 186.
vacant, 218–220.
visited, 231.
Circular letter, 294.
Circumcision, 82, 83.
Citations:
of accused, 135, 222.
of congregation, 394–404.
of judicatories, 195, 252, 273.
of witnesses, 135–138.
Civil courts, 18, 23, 96, 120.
decisions in judicatories, 120, 197.
Civil marriages, 97.
Clandestine marriages, 107.
Clerks, 541–546.
chosen, 543–550.
and commissioners, 544, 557.
of congregation meeting, 39, 165.
duties of, 432, 543, 546.
of General Assembly, 532, 539, 545.
members of court, 538, 544.
power over papers, 532, 543, 548.
of Presbytery, 236.
salary of, 545, 547.
of Session, 170, 544.
of Synod, 257, 545.
Close communion, 89.
Closed doors, 163, 174, 240, 537.
Collections, 111.
for the Boards, 64, 112, 500–505, 515–521.
for Commissioner Fund, 555.
for other objects, 113.
for Pastor's salary, 373.
for poor, 64, 111, 163.
in Sabbath-school, 164.
and Session, 110, 163, 520.
College in India, 472.
College of New Jersey, 338, 431.
and Professor of Theology, 431.
and Theological Seminary, 434.
Colleges, 338, 506–509.
Collegiate churches, 132, 186.
Colonization Society, 487.
Colored race, 486–498.
Candidates and Licentiates, 348, 352, 489.
churches, 492, 496, 498.

Colored race:
Ministers, 348, 487, 490.
taught, 486–488.
Colportage, 353, 455–457.
Columbia Graded School, 497.
Columbia Seminary, 435.
Commission, 196.
chairman of, 525, 531.
judicial, 196, 226, 253.
quorum of, 253.
report of, 196, 253.
to take testimony, 137.
Commission of commissioners, 303, 554–557.
Commissioners:
of congregation, 374, 394, 405.
to General Assembly, 265, 300, 303, 552–564.
to adjourned meeting, 300, 555.
committee-men, 279, 554.
expelled, 268.
expenses of, 559.
fund, 559
from new Presbyteries, 553.
receive printed minutes, 564.
report of, 554.
Committee:
advisory, Dom. Missions, 425.
appointed, 532.
of arrangements, 558.
on Benevolence, 515–521.
on Bills and Overtures, 532.
and Board, 418.
chairman of, 525, 532.
on commissions, 525, 557.
on correspondence, 276, 284.
to defend court, 196.
on Education, 439, 491.
on Elections, 557.
on Church Erection, 475.
on Church Extension, 423, 473.
on Freedmen, 486–498.
on Commissioner Fund, 559.
and General Assembly, 418.
on Church History, 521–523.
Judicial, 496.
on Manses, 512–515.
on Mileage, 560.
on Missions, 417–419.
to Freedmen, 495.
Foreign, 465–467.
Home, 255, 424–428, 494.
to nominate Pastor, 360.
Permanent, 418, 419.
Committee:
of Prosecution, 135, 223, 538.
on Publication, 448, 449.
on Relief Fund, 482.
on Revision, 20, 296–299.
Standing, 418, 419.
on Sustentation, 499–505.
on Temperance, 509–512.
Committee-men, 34, 279, 305, 554.
Common Board of Agency, 420.
Common fame, 135, 538.
Communicants:
absent, 146, 152, 153, 307.
cited, 135, 136.
contumacious, 136.
demand trial, 139.
demission of, 154–156.
disciplined, 39, 113, 122, 130, 159, 307.
dismissed, 135, 145–151.
of dissolved church, 148.
dropped, 154.
meetings of, 165, 306, 362–366.
membership of, 91, 149–159.
Minors, 87, 307.
in other churches, 156–159.
received, 26, 139–145, 150.
released to world, 155.
on reserved list, 154.
responsible, 115, 133, 201.
restored, 59, 142, 315.
slandered, 136.
and standards, 26.
suspended, 121, 153, 307.
in transitu, 136.
unconverted, 150–156.
vote:
for church officers, 306, 365.
for Trustees, 38.
withdraw, 151, 154.
witnesses, 137.
Communion:
administered, 90–93, 539.
close, 89.
and Deacons, 63, 69.
exclusion from, 90, 113, 122, 159 227, 314.
and fasting, 93.
invitation to, 91.
in other churches, 156–159.
private, 93.
terms of, 24, 26, 91, 139.
wine at, 92.
Competency of witnesses, 137.
Complaints, 190, 192, 253.
action on, 193, 198.

Complaints:
and appeals, 190.
effect of, 193, 251.
non-judicial, 193.
notice of, 193.
voters in, 199.
to what court, 268.
Concert of prayer, 74, 96.
Concurrent declarations, 280.
Conference, preliminary, 282.
Confession of Faith, 14, 17, 19, 347.
adopting, 17, 295, 312, 378.
revision of, 20, 290–297.
Confession of guilt, 159, 225.
Congregation, 30, 35–37.
chartered, 36–39.
cited, 394, 404.
collected, 33, 50, 386.
commissioners of, 394, 404.
meetings, 39, 165, 306, 362.
vs. Pastor, 406–410.
and Session, 165.
unorganized, 35.
vows of, 382.
Congregational Church, 10, 158, 160, 177, 183, 202, 205, 389.
appeals in, 191, 200.
Congregational library, 448.
Consanguinity, 102–105.
Conscience, 22, 24, 27, 154–156.
Consent of parties, 194, 195, 196, 226, 253, 269.
Consociation, 181.
Constitution of Presbyterian Alliance, 282.
Constitution of Presbyterian Church, 19, 24, 25, 294, 354, 378.
revised, 20, 295, 297.
Constitutional rules, 294, 565, 566.
Contingent fund, 557.
Contumacy, 136, 137, 224.
Convention of women, 473.
Co-Pastor, 49, 132, 186.
Copies of records, 172, 195, 230, 258.
Corporate rights of O. S. and N. S. churches, 281.
Corporation for relief, 481.
Correspondence, 275–284.
Corresponding members, 169, 265.
from Congregational churches, 34, 265, 277, 305.
in General Assembly, 265, 274–284, 288–293.
in Presbytery, 240, 274.
in Session, 169.
in Synod, 250, 274.
Council:
congregational, 181.
Œcumenical, 282.
of Presbyterian Alliance, 282.
Counsel for accused, 136, 224, 225.
Course of study in theological seminary, 352.
Courts, 117–126.
of appeal, 125, 165, 190, 250, 261, 268.
final, 251, 261, 268.
civil, 18, 23, 96, 120, 197.
disciplined, 194, 252, 273, 494.
elective affinity, 182.
fallible, 27, 178.
lower heard, 195.
retire, 196.
of original jurisdiction, 115, 133, 267.
of review and control, 123, 125, 177–179, 229, 252, 270.
Covenants, 142.
Credibility of witnesses, 137.
Creeds, 142, 178, 379.
Cromwell and foreign missions, 460.
Cumberland Presbytery, 286.

Danville Theological Seminary, 291, 340.
Days of prayer, 97.
Deaconess, 66.
Deacons, 60–71.
accounts of, 69.
Board of, 70.
decline to serve, 308, 317.
disciplined, 314.
dismissed, 314.
duties of, 38, 62.
elected, 32, 66, 68, 305–308, 319.
electors, 68, 306.
fund of, 63, 64, 111.
incompetent, 315–317.
installed, 32, 68, 309–313, 321.
and judicatories, 69.
and Lord's table, 63, 69.
meetings of, 70.
and Ministers and Ruling Elders, 65, 68, 308.
office of, 44, 62, 313, 317.
ordained, 32, 68, 309–312.
origin of office of, 61.
in other churches, 70, 71.
preach, 65.
qualifications of, 62, 65, 68.
records of, 70.
resign, 59.

Deacons:
responsibility of, 69, 115.
restored, 59, 317.
and Ruling Elders, 65, 308.
and Session, 64, 69.
and standards, 311.
term or rotary, 69, 322.
and Trustees, 38, 39, 63.
and vacant churches, 551.
vows of, 311.
without charge, 314–317.
Decisions:
in appeals and complaints, 191, 198, 251.
authority of, 27, 120, 189, 191, 197, 271, 281.
in other churches, 199.
reasons of, recorded, 251.
Declaration and testimony men, 293.
Delegates, 167, 238, 244.
chosen, 167, 184–188.
expenses of, 555.
to Presbyterian Alliance, 282, 284.
to Presbytery, 167, 184–188.
to Southern Church, 293.
to Synod, 241, 245, 246.
Demission, 116, 154–156, 215.
Deposed Ministers, 116, 122, 227.
restored, 228.
Deposed Ruling Elders and Deacons, 59, 122.
restored, 59, 317.
Depositories of Publications, 451.
Difference between Judicatories, 569.
Directory for Worship, 14, 18.
amended, 521.
revised, 19, 295–299.
Disabled Ministers, 480–486.
Fund, 482.
Disapproved-of records, 173, 230.
Disciples or Campbellites, 84, 206, 286.
Discipline, 27, 113, 124, 135–139, 159.
Book of, 12, 17.
revised, 19, 20, 275–299.
degrees of, 114, 122, 159, 227.
by General Assembly, 291.
importance of, 27, 124.
object of, 27, 114, 124.
in other churches, 160, 161, 197–201.
under Plan of Union, 278.
by Presbytery, 115, 210, 222, 228.
regularity of, 178.
Discipline:
by Session, 113–115, 127, 133, 159, 252.
subjects of, 113–116.
by Synod, 250–254.
in vacant churches, 127, 131.
Discontinue a trial, 139.
Discretion, years of, 87, 91.
Dismission, 14, 145–152.
of appeal, 197.
of baptized, 145.
of Candidates, 214.
of case, 138.
of churches, 234.
of communicants, 145–152.
indefinite, 147.
irregular, 147.
of Licentiates, 214.
of Ministers, 210–215.
in other churches, 156–159.
when take effect, 149.
Disorderly termination of membership, 145, 151.
Disruption of O.S. and N.S. churches, 286.
Dissatisfaction with Pastor, 406–410.
Dissent, 196.
Dissolution:
of churches, 232.
of General Assembly, 303, 538.
of pastoral relation, 209, 235, 343–411.
in other churches, 410.
Distribution:
of records in court, 195.
of tracts, 442–456.
District superintendents, 456.
Divide churches, 232.
Division in vote, 535.
Divorce, 101, 105, 106.
Doctrinal controversies, 271.
Doctrinal soundness, 26, 178, 210.
Doctrinal tracts, 448.
Doctrine and practice, 25.
Domestic Missions, 411–430.
Board of, 425.
early, 111, 415, 461, 486.
fund of, 111, 415, 461.
by General Assembly, 413.
Domestic Missionaries, 50, 386, 411–417.
itinerant, 51, 413, 416.
responsibility of, 413, 427.
Donegal schism, 288.
Double vote, 303, 426.
Dropped from roll, 154–156, 214, 222.

Duelists, 140.
Duties of:
Candidates, 336–340.
Clerks, 432, 541, 543.
Deacons, 25, 38, 60–71.
denominations, 9, 23, 29, 119, 206, 274.
Evangelists, 31, 386.
General Assembly, 260, 267–299.
Licentiates, 83, 354–358.
Ministers, 25, 45–52, 379–387.
Moderators, 367, 525–539.
Pastors, 25, 45–52.
Presbyteries, 190–235.
Ruling Elders, 25, 52–60, 311, 319.
Sessions, 132–169.
Synods, 250–256.

Editors, 52.
Education:
Board of, 430–442.
and Board of Foreign Missions, 472.
committee on, 439.
early measures, 329, 430–433.
female, 134, 442, 496.
fund, 432.
negro, 486–498.
scheme of, 432.
societies, 438–440.
Society, Am., 438.
Effect of appeal and complaint, 193, 251.
of approval of records, 173.
Elders. See Ruling Elders.
Election:
of Clerk, 170, 544–550.
of Commissioners, 263, 552–554.
of Deacons, 32, 66, 68, 305–308, 319.
of delegates, 167, 184–188.
irregular, 306.
mode of, changed, 317, 322.
of Moderator, 302, 528–530.
of Pastors, 166, 365–368.
in other churches, 364.
of Professors, 342, 393.
of Ruling Elders, 32, 57, 305–323.
rotary or term, 317–323.
of Sabbath-school officers, 162–164.
of secretaries, 393.
of Trustees, 38.
Elective affinity courts, 182.
Electors:
of church officers, 57, 68, 306.
of Pastors, 115, 166, 365.
of Trustees, 38, 115.
Eliot and missions, 459.
Emancipation Proclamation, 489.
Engagement, marriage, 107.
English Bible, 346, 349, 565.
English Presbyterian Church, 12, 14.
Entertainment of General Assembly, 562.
Fund for, 562.
Envelope plan, 373.
Episcopal Church, 9, 29, 46, 119, 156, 160, 177, 199, 202, 208, 387.
Board of Missions of, 467.
Reformed, 157, 204.
Evangelical Alliance, 96, 282.
Evangelist, 31, 33, 50, 386, 565.
Evidence, 137, 195.
Examinations:
of Candidates, 201, 327, 349.
for admission to Presbytery, 210.
of records, 172, 229, 258.
Exception to records, 173, 229.
Excommunication, 89, 122.
Expenses of delegates, 559.
Expository preaching, 81, 551.
Extemporary preaching, 81.
Extension, Church, 421–424, 473–475.
Extinct churches, 115, 233.
Extinct Presbyteries, 212, 254.
Extracts from records, 171, 541, 544
Extraordinary officers, 42.

Faith and Practice, 25, 27, 42.
Faith, profession of, 139–144.
Fairfield Institute, 497.
Fallibility of Church, 27, 178.
Fasting, 93.
Fellowships, 436.
Female education, 134, 442, 496.
First Book of Discipline, 12.
Fœticide, 106, 272.
Forbearance, 25.
Foreign Candidates, 336.
Foreign Licentiates, 212.
Foreign Ministers, 212.
Foreign Missions, 459–473.
A. B. C. F. M., 465.
of American Church, 461.
Board of, 471–473.
Women, 472.
committees on, 465–467.
early efforts, 459–463.

Foreign Missions:
and Indians, 459, 461–464.
Moravian, 461.
societies, 459–471.
women's, 473.
under Synod, 461.
Western F. M. Society, 469.
Foreign Missionaries, 308, 413, 485.
responsibility of, 413.
as Ruling Elders, 308.
Foreign Presbyteries, 465, 557.
Form:
of call, Pastor, 368.
of certificates. See CERTIFICATES.
of government, 19, 290, 347, 378.
revised, 19, 20, 294–297.
of installation:
of Pastors, 381–386, 397–401.
of Ruling Elders and Deacons, 310–313.
of Licensure, 353–355.
of ordination:
of Ministers, 381–387.
of Ruling Elders and Deacons, 310–313.
of organization of church, 30–41.
of reception of communicants, 142.
Four years in seminary, 352.
Fraternal relations, 288–293.
Freedmen, 486–499.
and Board of Home Missions, 495.
committee on, 491, 494.
Department of Board of Home Missions, 494.
early efforts, 486.
schools for, 484, 496–498.
French Presbyterian Church, 16.
Friends:
baptism of, 87.
marriage, 98.
Fund:
African, 487.
Commissioners', 559.
for Disabled Ministers, 482–484.
Education, 432.
Entertainment, 562–564.
Erection, 477.
Indian, 461.
Mission, 415.
for Pious Uses, 415, 473.
Poor, 63.
Relief, 483.
Fund:
Supplementary, 562–564.
Sustentation, 499–506.
Widows', 480.
Funerals, 140, 162.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 269–304.
appeals in, 268–270.
final, 251, 260, 268.
authority of, 250, 267, 271, 321
and Board of Education, 332.
and Boards, 255, 419.
the Bond of Union, 267.
Centennial of, 263.
and churches, 274, 563.
clerks of, 532, 539, 544.
commissions of, 253, 268.
commissioners of, 263, 267, 300, 552–564.
committee-men in, 279, 550.
and committees, 418.
and constitution, 295–299.
constitutional rules, 294.
corporate rights of, 281.
correspondence, 265, 275–284.
corresponding members of, 265.
decisions of, 271.
dissolution of, 300, 303, 538.
and doctrinal controversies, 271.
first, 17, 261, 262.
and final appeal, 260, 268.
letters, pastoral, from, 294.
and lower courts, 254, 267.
meetings of, 299–301.
adjourned, 290, 551.
place and time of, 262, 299, 301, 538.
members of, 263, 267, 300, 552–564.
and Ministers, 267, 274, 413.
foreign, 212.
minutes of, 544, 561, 564.
and missions, 413, 421–430, 465–473, 486–496.
Moderator of, 301, 303, 525–531.
of O. S. and N. S. branches, 261, 286, 287.
origin of, 17, 262.
and other churches, 265, 274–284.
opened, 301, 303, 529–541.
original jurisdiction, 267.
and overtures, 294–299.
pastoral letters of, 294.
and permanent committees, 418
and Plan of Union, 277–279.

General Assembly:
popular meetings at, 539.
powers of, 260, 265–299.
and Presbyterian Alliance, 281–284.
and Presbytery, 268, 273.
and questions in thesi, 271.
quorum of, 266.
ratio of representation in, 263, 558.
recommendations of, 271.
of reunited Church, 261.
review records, 258, 270.
and rules, constitutional, 294.
and schism, 285–294.
and seminaries, 332–347.
and Sessions, 274.
and slavery, 486–494.
and standards, 20, 294–299.
and standing committees, 417.
and standing orders, 538.
and standing rules, 294.
and Southern Pres. Church, 261, 288–293.
and Synods, 244, 248, 258, 270, 272.
testimony of, 272.
and theological seminaries, 332–347, 572.
title of, 260.
trial by commission in, 253, 269, 272.
triennial, 299, 300.
Trustees of, 482.
consummate union, 279.
women's convention during, 473.
General Presbytery, 241, 260.
General Rules for Judicatories, 530–538.
General rumor, 135, 538.
General Superintendent of Sabbath-school work, 458.
German Candidates, 336.
German schools, 430.
German theological seminaries, 341.
Gifts, extraordinary, 42.
Girls' school, 134, 442, 496.
Glebe, 369, 512.
God-parents, 88.
Goodness and truth, 25.
Government, church, 9–12, 117–126, 177–181.
by courts, 117–126.
definite, 30, 117.
in early Church, 44, 117.
kinds of, 9–12.
Government, church:
necessity of, 30, 117.
origin of, 11, 44, 118.
under Plan of Union, 277–279.
Presbyterian, 10, 21–27, 44, 118, 179, 261.
by representatives, 52–60, 245, 262.
right to determine, 23, 118.
uniformity of, 178.
Graded schools, 497.
Grievances:
of Pastor, 402–406.
of people, 406–409.
Guilty, plea of, 159, 225.

Half-way Covenant, 88.
Hand of fellowship, 313, 384.
Heathen:
baptism of, 86.
marriages of, 101.
missions to. See Foreign Missions.
witnesses, 138.
Hebrew and Greek, 335, 344.
Heidelberg Catechism, 108.
Helper, 50.
Helps, Sabbath-school, 162.
Heresy, 225, 272.
Higher criticism, 344.
Highest court of appeal, 251, 260, 268.
Historical sermons, 524.
Historical Society, 521–525.
Home instruction, 134.
Home Missions, 411–430.
applications to, 426, 427.
Board of, 415–430.
departments of:
Freedmen, 494.
sustentation, 501.
Women, 428–430.
committee on, 421–425.
advisory, 425.
early, 415.
Fund, 415.
by General Assembly, 413.
societies, 420.
Home Missionaries, 412–414.
Evangelists, 50.
itinerant, 51, 416.
Home, Presbyterian, 485.
Honorably retired, 52, 217.
House, Presbyterian, 449, 450.
Hymnal, 79.
Hymn-books, 77–80.

Immersion, 89.
Imperfectly organized churches, 34.
Imposition of hands, 203, 309, 383.
Incapacity of Ruling Elders, 315.
Incorporation, 36, 37, 39, 479.
Increase of the Ministry, 570.
Independent Brethren, 286.
Independent church government, 10.
Independent Synod of Missouri, 288.
Indian:
  Fund, 461.
  Missions, 426, 461–464.
  policy, 464.
Indiana Theological Seminary, 440.
India, missions in, 460.
India Theological Seminary, 472.
Induction of Moderator, 302, 529.
Infanticide, 106, 272.
Infants baptized, 85–89.
Inferior judicatory heard, 195.
  retire, 196.
Informal meetings of Session, 128, 144, 177, 537.
Inspiration, 345.
Installation, 208, 309, 325, 397.
  necessity of, 309, 313, 321, 370, 400.
  and ordination, 309, 375.
  in other churches, 401.
  of Pastor, 208, 381–386, 397, 400.
  of Ruling Elder and Deacon, 32, 312, 324.
  time and place of, 375, 397.
  vows at, 312, 382, 398.
Instruction:
  of children, 108, 134, 162, 436, 442, 447, 457.
  of colored race, 355, 486–499.
Insurance, life, 481, 486.
Intemperance. See Temperance.
Interlocutory meetings, 169, 537.
In transitu, 50, 115, 136.
Irish Presbyterian Church, 14, 499.
Irregular elections, 306.
Itinerant Missionaries, 51, 413, 416.

Jefferson College, 339.
Jesus Association, 459.
Judgment, private, 22.
Judgment recorded, 194.
Judgment without process, 133.
Judicatories, 117–304, 572.
  differences between, 569.
  open and private, 240, 537.
  in other churches, 156–159, 199.
Judicial business, 131, 222, 537.
Judicial commission, 196, 226, 253, 269.
Judicial committee, 38.
Judicial process, 222.
Jurisdiction over:
  baptized members, 108, 114.
  Candidates, 116, 133, 201, 326, 328, 331, 347, 355.
  communicants, 115, 136.
    of extinct church, 115.
    in transitu, 136.
    suspended, 115, 133.
  Licentiates, 116, 133, 355.
  Ministers, 50, 116, 181, 210–229, 267.
  Missionaries, 116, 413, 428.
  original, 115, 133, 181, 210, 267.
  Ruling Elders and Deacons, 58, 69, 116.

Knowledge and Religion, 25.

Ladies' Boards, 428, 472.
Ladies' schools, 134, 402.
Lane Theological Seminary, 340.
Lay baptism, 83.
Laying on of hands, 203, 309, 383.
Lay on table, 534.
Lay ordination, 206.
Lay preaching, 50, 80, 547.
Lesson-helps, 162, 457.
Letters. See Certificates.
  circular, 294.
  pastoral, 294.
Liberia, 490.
Liberty, Christian, 22.
Liberty, Sabbath-school, 163, 458.
License, 202, 320–358.
  examination for, 348–351.
  expire, 357.
  form of, 353, 355.
  and ordination, 202, 353.
  in other churches, 202, 387–392.
  renewed, 357.
  revoked, 357.
  temporary, 353.
  by what Presbytery, 326, 347.
  vows at, 354.
  when applied for, 351.
Licentiates, 347, 355.
  and benediction, 117.
  as Candidates for pastorate, 358–362.
  and Catechism, 109, 350, 354.
  as Clerks, 542.
  colored, 335, 348, 352, 495, 499.

Licentiates:
communicants, 116, 133, 328, 355.
dismissed, 214, 356.
duties of, 83, 354–356.
foreign, 212.
and judicatories, 356.
and marriage, 97, 356.
as Moderator, 130, 356.
ordained, 203, 381.
from other churches, 207, 212.
powers of, 354.
qualifications of, 348–358.
preach, 353–358.
received, 212.
responsible, 115, 133, 355.
and standards, 354.
transferred, 356.
women, 325.
Life insurance, 481, 486.
Limited eldership, 317–323.
Lincoln University, 341, 348, 352, 490.
Liquor, drinking and sale of, 140, 509–512.
List, reserved, 154.
Literature, Sabbath-school, 163, 447, 457.
Liturgies, 75.
Loans of Erection Fund, 476.
Local Evangelists, 50, 354, 565.
London Missionary Society, 460.
Luther and foreign missions, 459.
Lutheran Church, 158, 161, 177, 200, 203.

Makemie, Rev., 14.
Manses, 369, 512–515
and Board of Erection, 515.
committee on, 512–515.
Marriage, 97–108.
Mass. Society for Christian Knowledge, 446.
Mass. Tract Society, 446.
Masters and baptism, 86.
Means of grace, 71–117.
and Session, 80, 162–164, 546–548.
Medway Graded School, 497.
Meetings:
of congregation, 165–167.
called by Session, 165, 306, 363, 404, 408.
demanded, 165, 362.
to elect commissioners, 405–409.
Meetings of congregation:
to elect Pastor, 115, 166, 362.
to elect Ruling Elders and Deacons, 56, 66, 115, 165, 306.
and resignation of Pastor, 115, 166, 404, 408.
to elect Trustees, 39, 115.
officers of, 39, 165, 363, 367, 409.
opened and closed, 365.
records of, 367.
of General Assembly, 290–303, 538.
adjourned, 301, 551.
Clerk of, 541–546.
dissolved, 300, 304, 538.
interlocutory, 537.
Moderator of, 301–304, 525–531.
opened and closed, 301, 303, 538.
place and time, 262, 301, 304, 538.
pro-re-nata, 300.
records of, 544, 557, 560.
popular at judicatories, 539.
of Presbytery, 236–240.
adjourned, 238.
interlocutory, 537.
intermediate, 237.
less than a quorum, 189.
officers of, 525, 528, 542, 545–550.
opened and closed, 239, 543.
ordered by Synod, 239.
place and time, 237–239.
private, 240, 537.
pro-re-nata, 237.
records of, 231, 252.
on Sabbath, 247.
stated, 237.
of Session, 168.
called, 168.
demanded, 168.
informal, 128, 140, 177, 537.
interlocutory, 169, 537.
for judicial business, 131, 168.
officers of, 129–132, 170.
opened and closed, 176, 543.
private, 168, 537.

Meetings of Session:
records of, 170, 194, 229.
of Synod, 247–250.
adjourned, 248.
failure of, 247.
interlocutory, 537.
less than a quorum, 247.
officers of, 256, 525–538, 543–546.
opened and closed, 256, 538.
place and time, 248.
private, 537.
pro-re-nata, 248, 249.
records of, 257.
on Sabbath, 247.
stated, 256.
of women's convention, 473.
Members:
baptized. See BAPTIZED MEMBERS.
of Boards, 417–419.
of church. See COMMUNICANTS.
of commissions, 196, 253, 269.
of committees, 531.
of General Assembly. See COMMISSIONERS.
at adjourned meetings, 300.
corresponding, 265, 274–285.
of judicatories, 126, 181, 241, 263.
retire, 196.
vote, 199, 230, 535.
as witnesses, 137.
of Presbytery, 181–188, 210.
at adjourned meetings, 238.
corresponding, 240, 274.
examined, 210.
of extinct Presbyteries, 115, 212, 253.
of Session, 126.
corresponding, 169.
of Synod, 241–246.
at adjourned meeting, 248.
corresponding, 250, 274.
Membership, church, 9, 23, 29, 141.
begin and terminate, 142, 150, 151, 154.
of the disciplined, 146.
of the dismissed, 145, 151.
of the restored, 142.
Methodist Episcopal Church, 158, 160, 179, 181, 200, 203, 204, 391.
Book Concern, 446.
Mileage, Committee on, 560–564.
Minister, translation of, 392–401.
Ministerial:
life insurance, 431, 486.
parity, 10, 46.
relief, 483.
support, 368–374, 504.
sustentation, 499, 506.
Ministers, 45–52, 55, 65.
absent, 130, 215.
accused, 223.
accuser of, 223.
authority of, 27, 120.
and baptism, 83, 87, 143.
and benediction, 47, 117.
and church membership, 133.
over two churches, 49, 132, 186.
called, 161, 365–368, 393.
cited, 137, 138, 224.
colored, 335, 348, 486–498.
as counsel, 136, 224.
counsel for, 224.
demand trial, 223.
demit, 116, 215, 222, 228.
deposed, 116, 123, 207, 229.
disabled, 446, 486.
disciplined, 222, 227.
dismissed, 210–215.
dropped from roll, 214, 222.
duties of, 25, 45, 47–52, 381.
elected Pastor, 166, 362, 393.
Evangelists, 31, 33, 50, 386.
of extinct Presbyteries, 254.
foreign, 212, 213.
honorably retired, 52, 217.
installed, 208, 381–386, 397–400.
in other churches, 401.
in transitu, 50.
itinerant, 51, 413, 416.
judged, 210, 222.
and Lord's Supper, 90, 92, 93.
members:
of church, 133.
of court, 181, 241, 263.
of Presbytery, 181–188, 210, 254.
Missionary, 51, 413–416.
Moderators, 129–132, 525, 450
office of, perpetual, 44.
ordain, 32, 57, 68, 310, 383.
ordination of, 203, 205, 208, 324, 383.
in other churches, 389-392.
and ordinances, 74, 76, 80, 82-93, 97–117.

Ministers:
organize churches, 30, 35, 232.
parity of, 10, 46.
priests, 47.
qualifications of, 45, 55, 378–381.
and qualified letters, 216.
and quorum, 127, 188, 246, 266.
received, 208, 210, 229.
rejected, 210.
removed, 203, 209, 235, 252, 393, 397, 401–411.
responsible, 50, 116, 210–229, 252, 268, 413, 428.
restored, 221, 228.
retired, 52, 215.
and Ruling Elder, 55, 57, 308.
and Sabbath-school, 109, 162.
and sacraments, 83–93, 143.
and secular business, 215, 485.
sine titulo, 47, 50, 207.
slandered, 223.
and the standards, 24, 25, 379.
suspended, 222, 224, 227.
translated, 392–401.
tried, 222.
unemployed, 216–220, 572.
Unitarian, 84, 119, 206.
vows of, 379, 381.
withdraw, 24, 220.
without charge, 47, 50, 57, 66, 183, 216–220.
witnesses, 137.
women, 81, 325.
Ministerial adjustment, 572.
Ministry, 45, 52, 567.
call to, 324.
distinct from eldership, 55, 308.
increase of, 570.
parity of, 10, 46.
threefold, 46, 204, 388.
Minutes. See Records.
Minutes of General Assembly, 544, 561, 564.
Minutes of less than a quorum, 128.
Miraculous gifts, 42.
Mission:
chapels, 187, 478.
charges, 500.
churches, 233.
Fund, 415.
pastorates, 502.
Presbyteries, 183, 466, 548.
Missionaries, 51.
of Board of Publication, 442–459.
Missionaries:
and the Boards, 422, 427.
colored, 335, 348, 486–498.
Evangelists, 31, 33, 50, 233, 386.
foreign, 233, 413.
and General Assembly, 413, 423, 466.
itinerant, 51, 413, 416.
Moravian, 460.
Pastors, 524, 526.
responsible, 115, 413, 428.
Ruling Elders, 308.
superintendents of, 256, 436.
supervisory, 256.
Synodical, 256.
Missionary department, 452–459.
Missionary Fund, 415.
Missionary societies, 460, 465–471.
Missions, 411–525.
Boards of. See Boards.
Committees of. See Committees.
early, 109, 415, 459, 486.
and General Assembly, 413, 421–426, 461–472, 486.
and Presbytery of Salem, 471.
and Synod of Pittsburg, 469.
Mixed churches, 278.
Mode of electing officers, 279, 282, 528.
charged, 317, 322.
Moderator, 525–531.
authority of, 525–531.
call meetings, 168, 237, 249.
chosen, 302, 528.
and committees, 531.
of congregation, 165, 363, 367, 409.
appeal from, 165, 363.
duties of, 240, 256, 301, 303, 485–531.
of General Assembly, 300–303, 485–531.
last present, 301, 531.
vice-, 303, 531.
inducted, 303, 529.
in judicial cases, 131, 303, 528.
last present, 301, 531.
leave the chair, 303, 531.
member of judicatory, 301, 527, 531.
a Minister, 129–132, 525, 540.
and oaths, 526.
preach, 239, 256, 301.
of Presbytery, 237, 528, 540.

Moderator:
of Sessions, 129–132, 527, 542.
appeal from, 129.
convene Session, 168.
other than Pastor, 120, 540.
of vacant churches, 130, 131, 220, 528.
of Synod, 248, 529, 540.
vice, 303. 531.
vote of, 303, 526, 531.
Mohegan Bible, 460.
Monthly concert of prayer, 74.
More, H., Tracts, 446.
Moravian missions, 460.
Mormonism, 97, 99.
Morse, Rev. Jedidiah, 446.
Music, 76, 77, 164.
and Session, 76, 164.

NAMES OF MINISTERS, 45.
Narrative of religion, 174, 235, 259.
blanks for, 175, 235.
Necessity of church government, 117.
of Ruling Elders, 34.
Negro slavery, 486–494.
New Albany Theological Seminary, 341.
Newberry Scholarship, 436.
New England Tract Society, 446.
New Light party, 286.
New School branch, 280, 286.
New version of Bible, 445.
Nomination of officers, 166, 306.
Non-communicants' vote, 38.
Normal classes, 458.
Normal schools for Freedmen, 497.
North-western Advisory Committee, 425.
North-western Theological Seminary, 340.
Notice:
of appeal and complaint, 193.
of congregational meeting, 363.
of deposition of Ministers, 228.
of reception of members, 142, 145.
of Ministers, 214.

OATHS ADMINISTERED, 123, 526.
Object:
of discipline, 124.
of church government, 27, 124, 178.
of ordinances, 72.
of particular churches, 30.
Object:
of union of churches, 178.
Objections filed, 138.
Œcumenical Council, 282.
Offences, 121.
Offenders, 135, 159, 195, 222, 252, 273.
disciplined, 113, 159, 227, 268.
restored, 142, 221, 228, 315, 317.
Offerings in worship, 567.
Officers:
of church, 25, 41–71.
chosen, 32, 57, 66, 166, 305–323, 365–368, 393–397.
duties of, 25, 38, 45–71, 311–323, 378–382.
electors of, 56, 68, 306, 365.
extraordinary, 42.
permanent, 44–71, 118.
qualifications of, 26, 45, 57, 66, 308, 378.
and standards, 24, 26, 311, 379.
of General Assembly, 538.
of congregational meetings, 39, 165, 363, 367.
of Sabbath-school, 162–164.
of synagogue, 44, 53, 61.
Old and New School churches, 280, 286.
records of, 281.
union of, 280.
Old psalms, 78.
Open and private judicatories, 168, 239, 537.
Opening sermon, 239, 256, 301, 528.
Order, rules of, 530, 538.
Orderly appeals and complaints, 192.
Orders, standing, 538.
Ordinances, 71–117.
of Old and New Testaments, 72, 82.
and Session, 74, 359, 546–548.
in vacant churches, 80, 359, 546–548.
Ordination, 51, 203, 309, 383.
of Ministers, 203, 205, 324, 383.
charges at, 385.
by fraud, 207.
and installation, 375, 382.
lay, 206.
in other churches, 387–392.
of other churches recognized, 26, 206.

Ordination of Ministers:
of Roman Catholic Church, 203, 206.
on Sabbath, 208, 380.
sine titulo, 51, 207, 386.
time and place, 206, 375, 386.
trials for, 378.
Unitarian, 206.
votes for, 380.
vows, 311, 379, 381.
by what Presbytery, 208.
by whose hands, 205, 383.
of women, 81, 325.
of Ruling Elders and Deacons, 57, 309.
charges at, 313.
necessary, 309, 313.
vows, 311.
without election, 306.
Organization of Church, 30–41, 232.
Origin of Church, 28, 41.
Origin of church government, 11, 44, 118.
Original jurisdiction, 115, 133, 182, 210, 267.
Original parties, 135, 195, 223.
Orphan fund, 486.
Orphans, heathen, and baptism, 86.
Overtures:
to General Assembly, 254, 294.
to Presbyteries, 231, 294–299.

Pan-Presbyterian Council, 282.
Papal church government, 9.
Papers of General Assembly, 532.
Parents:
and children, 9, 29, 108, 134, 146, 324.
consent to marriage, 96, 107.
and Sabbath-school, 110.
Parity of Ministers, 10, 46.
Parochial schools, 436–438, 497.
Parsonages, 369, 512–515.
Particular church, See Church.
Parties, original, 135, 195, 223.
Parts of trial, 349–351, 378–380.
Passover, 73, 82.
Pastoral:
churches, 500.
letters, 294.
relation, 358–411.
constituted, 208, 375–400.
in other churches, 401.
dissolved, 209, 235, 253, 393, 401–411.
Pastoral relation:
in other churches 401
permanent, 392, 403.
visitation, 161.
Pastors, 45–50.
assistant, 49, 131.
and church courts, 181, 241, 263, 542.
at large, 49.
communicants, 133.
over churches, 49, 132, 186.
duties of, 25, 45–52.
elect, 50, 130.
elected, 166, 365–368, 393.
in other churches, 364, 366.
electors of, 166, 365.
emeritus, 49, 131.
helper, 50.
installed, 208, 381–386, 397, 400.
in other churches, 401.
Moderator, 128–131, 166, 363, 367, 409, 527, 540.
ordain, 57, 68, 310.
and ordinances, 74, 76, 80, 82–93, 97, 108, 111, 117.
ordination of, 203, 205, 324, 383.
and people, 402–410.
and Presbytery, 210, 216, 373.
procured, 359–362.
and quorum, 127, 128.
removed, 208, 235, 252, 393, 397, 401–411.
resign, 208, 401–411.
in other churches, 410.
and Ruling Elders, 45, 48, 55 57.
and Sabbath-school, 110, 162.
and sacraments, 83, 87, 90–93, 143.
salary of, 209, 368–374, 409, 502–505.
sought, 359–362.
suspended, 228.
translated, 209, 392–401.
tried, 222.
and Trustees, 37.
vs. people, 402–406.
voters for, 166, 365.
withdraw, 24, 214, 216, 220.
Penalties, 122, 159, 227.
People:
and representation, 53, 167, 184–188.

People:
vs. Pastor, 406-410.
Permanent Clerk, 548.
Permanent Committee, 418.
on Benevolence, 515–521.
and Boards, 419.
on Correspondence, 284.
on Education, 439, 491.
on Erection, 475.
on Extension, 423, 473.
on Freedmen, 486–499.
on Manses, 512–515.
on Missions, 411–414.
Foreign, 467.
Home, 424, 494.
on Publication, 448.
on Relief, 482.
on Sustentation, 501.
on Temperance, 509–512.
Permanent officers, 44, 45–71, 118.
Permanent eldership, 58, 317–323.
Petition:
for organization of church, 31, 232.
right of, 191.
Pew-holders, 166, 365.
Pew-rents, 372.
Philadelphia Education Society, 440.
Place of meeting, 239, 304.
changed, 248.
Plan of Union, 266, 277–279.
Plea of guilty, 150, 225.
Polity. See GOVERNMENT.
Polygamy, 97.
Poor. See DEACON.
Fund, 63, 164.
Pope, 9, 46, 85, 179.
Popular meetings, 539.
Postponement, 533.
Posture in prayer, 75.
Pouring in baptism, 89.
Power of Boards, 419.
Power, church, 24, 27, 120, 124, 191.
source of, 26–28, 44, 121.
Power:
of church courts, 27, 120, 124, 191.
of church officers, 25, 45, 52, 120.
of civil courts, 18, 23, 120, 197.
of General Assembly, 260, 267, 270.
ministerial, 27, 120.
of Presbytery, 190–235.
of Session, 134–168.
of Synod, 250–256.
Power:
of Trustees, 40, 41.
Praise, 76–80.
Prayer, 74–76, 81, 94, 97.
week of, 96.
Preacher of opening sermon, 239 256, 301, 528.
Preaching, 80–82, 358.
extempore, 81.
lay, 51, 80.
in vacant church, 80, 546.
without license, 80, 353.
women, 81.
Preliminary Principles, 21–27.
Presbyter. See MINISTER.
Presbyterial schools, 430.
Presbyterial visitation, 231.
Presbyterian:
Alliance, 281–284.
in India, 472.
Annuity and Life Insurance Co., 481.
Boards. See BOARDS.
churches, 10–15.
O. S. and N. S., 280, 286.
Historical Society, 521–525.
House, 449, 450.
Hymnal, 79.
Polity, 10, 21–27, 44, 118, 179, 261.
importance of, 119.
origin of, 11, 118.
Tract and Sunday-school Book Soc., 447.
Presbyterianism, 10, 11, 21–27, 44, 118, 179, 261.
in early Church, 44, 53, 54.
in New Testament, 11, 21–27, 44, 53, 118.
in Old Testament, 11, 191.
Presbytery, 177–241.
absentees from, 185, 216.
appeals in, 190–198.
and Boards, 327–340, 422, 427.
boundaries of, 182, 184.
changed, 184, 252, 273.
chartered, 39, 445.
and church charters, 36–39.
and churches, extinct, 148, 233.
churches represented in, 184.
cited, 252.
Clerk of, 236, 543.
commissions of, 196, 226.
commissioners of, 246, 263, 303, 551–564.
and congregations, 35, 394, 402-405.

Presbytery:
corresponding members of, 240, 274.
delegates from, 242–245.
delegates to, 167, 184–188.
dissolved, 183, 273.
divided, 252, 273.
and doctrine and discipline, 231.
elective affinity, 182.
extinct, 116, 212, 254.
first, 12, 16, 246.
foreign, 184, 273, 466, 467, 557.
formed, 184, 213, 273.
and General Assembly, 254, 268, 273, 295–299.
incorporated, 39, 479.
less than five Ministers, 183.
meetings. See MEETINGS.
members of, 181–189, 210.
corresponding, 240, 274.
examined, 210.
and Ministers, 183, 208.
mission, 183, 466, 547.
and Missionaries, 115, 412, 428.
and missions, 411–413, 416, 471.
Moderator of, 237, 528, 542.
narrative of, 174, 235, 259.
overtures to, 254, 275.
powers of, 190–235.
over Candidates, 201, 323–358.
to employ, 353, 358.
to examine, 201, 327, 349, 387.
to license, 202, 326, 347, 353–356.
to receive and dismiss, 202, 214, 327.
to recommend, 327, 330–337.
to superintend, 201, 328, 339.
over churches, 30–35, 186, 218, 358, 412.
to assess, 559.
to cite, 394, 404.
to dismiss, 234.
to dissolve, 148, 234.
to divide, 232.
to form, 30, 35, 232.
to receive, 234.
to superintend vacant, 218–220, 358, 412, 547.
to unite, 234.
Presbytery, powers of, over churches:
to vacate, 209, 235, 253, 393, 401–411.
to visit, 233.
over commissioners, 303, 545, 552, 554.
over communicants, 148, 232.
over congregations, 35, 235, 394, 395, 402–405.
over Licentiates:
to approve call, 374–378.
to examine, 378.
to extend or recall license, 357.
to ordain, 203, 205, 381.
to receive and dismiss, 212, 214.
to superintend, 115, 133, 355.
over members of, 209–229.
to censure, 115, 222.
to judge qualification, 210.
to receive and dismiss, 209–215.
over Ministers, 115, 207–229.
to approve calls, 208, 368, 377, 396.
to approve salary, 368–374.
to cite, 137, 138, 224.
to direct, 216–220.
to discipline, 207, 222–229.
to dissolve pastoral relation, 209, 235, 253, 393, 401–411.
to examine, 210.
to install, 209, 381–386, 397–401.
to judge, 208, 210, 223–229.
to receive and dismiss, 209–215.
to remove, 209, 235, 293, 404–411.
to restore, 221, 228.
to translate, 392–401.
over Missionaries, 115, 413, 428.
over Ruling Elders and Deacons, 58, 69.

Presbytery, powers of, over Ruling Elders and Deacons:
to commission, 263, 548–550.
to discipline, 58, 127, 133–139.
to retire, 316.
over Sessions, 185.
to answer appeals, etc., 190–199.
to appoint Moderators, 131, 528.
to direct, 217–222, 547.
to review records, 172, 229.
quorum of, 188–190.
less than, 189, 531.
records of, 235, 252.
reports of, 235.
schools under, 430.
and Session, 133, 177–179.
succession of, 273.
and Synod, 239, 251–253.
territory of, 182, 184.
Trustees of, 39.
try by commission, 196, 226.
Precentor, 77.
Presiding officer, 525.
Previous question, 534.
Priests, 47.
Princeton Theological Seminary, 340.
Principal commissioner, 554.
Principles of Presbyterianism, 9, 10, 21–27, 44, 118, 179, 261.
Printed minutes, 195, 259, 546, 561, 564.
Private judgment, 22.
Private meetings, 168, 240, 537.
Probation of foreign Ministers, 212, 224.
Probationers, 323.
Process, judicial, 131, 134–139, 159, 194, 224.
Profession of faith, 139–145.
Professor of Theology, 339.
Professors in theological seminaries, 52, 332, 342–346.
and Candidates, 332–337.
chosen, 342, 363.
responsible, 115, 133, 182, 210, 342.
Property of church, 36–41.
Prophets, 43.
Proportional giving, 520, 568.
Pro-re-nata meeting, 237, 248, 249, 300.
Prosecutor, 135, 138, 195, 538.
of a Minister, 223.
Prosecuting Committee, 223, 538.
Protest, 199.
Psalms and hymns, 78.
Psalms, old, 78.
Psalmist, 79.
Publication, 442–459.
of bans, 107.
of Bibles, 443.
Board of, 447–459.
departments of, 451–459.
of books and tracts, 445–454.
Committee on, 448.
early measures, 442.
of lesson-helps, 162, 457.
of restoration, 122, 123.
of sentence, 122.
by Synod, 447.
Puritans, 15.

Qualifications:
for baptism, 85–87, 139–145.
of Candidates, 326–328.
of communicants, 91, 139–145.
of Deacons, 24, 26, 62, 65, 66.
of Licentiates, 348–351.
of members of Presbytery, 210.
of Ministers, 24, 26, 45, 55, 210, 378, 382.
of Ruling Elders, 24, 26, 56, 311.
Qualified certificates, 146, 150, 212.
Questions of doctrine and discipline, 231, 295.
Questions in thesi, 271.
Quorum, 530.
of commissions, 253.
of General Assembly, 266.
less than, 127, 189, 247, 273, 531.
of Presbytery, 188.
of Session, 127.
of Synod, 246.

Ratio of Representation, 242, 246, 263, 558.
Reading records, 194, 195.
Reading sermons, 81.
Reasons recorded, 257.
Reception:
of churches, 234.
of Licentiates, 212.
of members, 91, 139–145.
of Ministers, 210–213.
of Probationers, 212, 323.
Recognition of other churches, 9, 23, 29, 119, 206, 274.

Recommendations:
for aid, 327, 330–338, 426, 477, 484, 486, 499.
of General Assembly, 267, 271.
Record:
of judgment, 194.
of license, 355.
of ordination, 385.
of trial, 171, 194, 195, 257.
Record-book:
of church courts, 170, 235, 239, 243, 252, 270.
of congregations, 165, 170, 367, 543.
of Deacons, 70.
Records of judicatories, 170, 229, 254, 257, 270, 543.
in appeal, 195.
approved, 173, 229, 258.
copies of, 172, 258, 259.
of O. S. and N. S. churches, 281.
printed, 195, 259, 544, 557, 560.
not private, 230.
translated, 258.
of Trustees, 38.
Reduction of representation, 263, 264, 558.
References, 127, 190–193.
and appeals, 190, 253.
Reformed churches, 10.
Reformed Episcopal Church, 157, 200, 204.
Reformers and Presbyterianism, 11, 12.
Registers, sessional, 174.
Re-installation, 321.
Relation of Church and State, 18, 23, 120.
Relation of denominations, 9, 23, 29, 119, 206, 274.
Relation, pastoral, 208, 358–411.
Relief, Board of, 480–486.
Relief Fund, 483.
Religious Tract Societies, 445.
Removal of Ruling Elders, 58, 59, 314–322.
of Ministers, 203, 209, 235, 252, 393, 397, 401–411.
Reorganization of Synods, 242–245, 272.
Reports:
of Boards, 419, 540.
of commissioners, 550, 552.
of commissions, 196, 241.
of committees, 518.
of Presbyteries, 235.
Reports:
of Sabbath-schools, 163.
of seminaries, 334.
of Sessions, 170, 174.
of Synods, 259.
Representation, 52–60, 245, 263.
reduced, 263, 264, 558.
Representatives, 52–60, 167, 184–188
in General Assembly, 263.
in Presbytery, 167, 184–188.
in Synod, 241–246.
Reserved list, 154.
Resignation:
of Pastors, 209, 401–410.
in other churches, 410.
of Ruling Elders and Deacons, 59.
Resolved doctrinal questions, 231, 295.
Responsive service, 75.
Restoration:
of communicants, 59, 123, 142, 315.
absent, 150, 307.
of Ministers, 123, 221, 228.
of Ruling Elders and Deacons, 59, 307, 309.
Retired Ministers, 52, 217.
Reunion, terms of, 280.
Review, courts of, 123, 125, 177–179, 229, 252.
Review of records, 172, 229, 258, 270.
Revision of the Bible, 445.
Revision of standards, 19, 20, 295–299.
Right of appeal, 191.
Right hand of fellowship, 313, 384.
Right hand of welcome, 386, 400.
Right of private judgment, 22.
Right to vote, 38, 166, 306, 365.
Roll:
of absentees, 145, 152–154.
of baptized members, 174.
of communicants, 145–156, 174.
struck from, 154–156, 214, 215, 222.
Roman Catholic Church, 9, 43, 46, 85, 179.
baptism, 84, 85, 179.
bond of union, 179, 180.
ordination, 203, 206.
schools, 23, 134, 442.
Rotary Ruling Elders and Deacons, 59, 69, 317–323.
Rouse's Version, 78.
Rule of faith and practice, 27, 42.

Ruler of synagogue, 53.
Rules, constitutional, 294.
Rules of order, 530–538.
Rules, standing, 294.
Ruling Elders, 52–60, 305–323.
absent from Presbytery, 167, 185.
accredited, 188.
acting, 58, 184, 317.
cease to act, 58, 184, 314, 315, 321.
certificate of dismission, 150.
returned, 149, 309, 315.
in Christian Church, 44, 54.
in O. T. Church, 53.
in what church serve, 57, 309.
and communion, 93.
and Deacons, 65, 308.
as delegates, 167, 184, 186, 238, 242, 246.
decline to serve, 128, 308, 317.
demand trial, 139.
disciplined, 58, 127, 133, 136.
dismissed, 145, 150, 315.
duties of, 52, 55.
in church. See Session.
in the higher courts, 59, 184, 321, 384.
in sacraments, 83, 93.
elected, 52, 57, 305–323.
explain Scriptures, 551.
incompetent, 58, 314, 315.
infirm, 58, 314.
installed, 32, 312, 313, 321.
and meetings of Session, 168.
of Synod, 246.
and Ministers, 55, 57, 308.
Moderator, 131, 165, 542.
necessary, 34.
nominated, 306.
ordained, 32, 57, 309, 310.
and ordinances, 80, 359, 546–548.
and ordination, 309, 310.
of Ministers, 384.
of Ruling Elders and Deacons, 310.
in other churches, 60.
and Pastor, 57, 126, 407.
permanent, 58, 313, 317.
perpetual, 44, 58, 318.
and quorum, 127, 188, 246, 266.
re-elected, 319–323.
re-installation, 321.
relieved, 59, 314.
resign, 59, 314, 317.
Ruling Elders:
responsible, 58, 59, 115.
restored, 59, 315, 317.
return, 154, 309, 314.
rotary, 59, 317–322.
and sacraments, 83, 93.
and standards, 311.
suspended, 314.
in synagogue, 44, 53.
term, 59, 317–322.
unacceptable, 58, 315–317.
of vacant churches, 56, 80, 358, 551.
vows of, 312.
who may be, 56, 308.
withdraw, 151, 317.
without charge, 59, 184, 315, 321

Sabbath:
breakers, 94, 141.
church courts on, 247.
observance, 93.
ordination on, 208, 380.
schools:
Bible correspondence, 459.
and Board of Publication, 457–459.
and Catechisms, 109, 163.
colporteurs, 457.
general superintendent of, 457.
helps, 162, 447, 457–459.
hymnal, 164.
literature, 163, 447, 457, 458.
music, 79, 164.
normal classes, 458.
officers, 162, 163, 164.
and parents, 110.
and Pastor, 110, 162, 164.
reports of, 163, 458.
and Session, 134, 162, 458.
statistics, 163.
in vacant churches, 547.
work, 457, 459.
Secretary of, 458.
Sacraments, 72, 82–93.
administered, 83–93.
and Deacons, 69.
and Licentiates, 83, 90, 356.
and ordinances, 73.
and Ruling Elders, 83–93.
and Session, 74, 139–147.
Salary of Clerks, 543, 545.
Salary of Pastors, 209, 368–374, 502–505.

Salary of Pastors:
in call, 368.
changed, 370, 371, 409.
definite, 368, 369.
of former, 378.
insufficient, 378, 402, 403.
and Presbytery, 374.
how raised, 370–374.
San Francisco Theological Seminary, 341.
Scheme for education, 432.
Schisms, 285–294.
Scholarships, 333, 335, 436.
Schools:
and Board of Erection, 478.
for Freedmen, 489–491, 496.
for girls, 134, 442, 496.
parochial, 436–438, 497.
presbyterial, 430.
Sabbath. See SABBATH-SCHOOL.
Scotch Missionary Society, 461.
Scotia Seminary, 496.
Scottish Society for Christian Knowledge, 460.
Scriptural rule of faith, 27, 42.
Seal of General Assembly, 20.
Second Book of Discipline, 12.
Secretary of S.-school work, 458.
Secretaries of Boards, 52, 265, 393.
chosen, 393.
Self-accused, 135.
Seminaries. See THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.
Sentence, 122, 159, 227.
degrees of, 122, 227.
published, 122, 228.
removed, 39, 122, 142, 228, 315.
without process, 159, 225.
Separations, 285–294.
O. S. and N. S. churches, 286, 287.
Sermon, opening, 239, 256, 301, 528.
Sermons, 81.
Service:
installation, 312, 321, 381–386, 397–401.
ordination of Pastor, 381–387.
of Ruling Elder, 310–313.
in vacant churches, 80, 359, 546–548.
Session, 126–177.
appeals from, 190–199.
and baptized members, 113–115.
and Boards, 112, 520.
and Candidates, 115, 133, 201, 326–331, 347, 355.
Session:
censured, 185, 195.
cite, 134–139, 252.
cited, 195.
Clerk of, 170, 542.
and collections, 112, 164, 520.
and communicants, 133–160.
and communion, 93.
and congregation, 165.
corresponding members of, 169
and other courts, 133, 177–179.
and Deacons, 64, 69.
delegates of, 167, 184–188.
discipline, 113–115.
baptized members, 113–115.
Candidates, 115, 133, 201, 326.
communicants, 89, 113, 122, 145, 159, 190.
Licentiates, 115, 133, 355.
duties of, 132–167.
and General Assembly, 274.
and means of grace, 80, 162–165, 547.
meetings. See MEETINGS.
private, 168, 537.
and meetings:
of church, 165, 306.
of congregation, 167, 362–372, 393, 404–410.
and Ministers, 128, 133, 138, 210.
Moderator of, 48, 129, 527, 528, 542.
and music, 76, 164.
nominate:
Pastor, 359–362.
Ruling Elders and Deacons, 166, 306.
opened and closed, 176, 538.
and ordinances, 74, 80, 358, 546 548.
and parochial schools, 436–438 497.
and Poor Fund, 63, 64, 164.
powers of, 134–167.
and Presbytery, 133, 177–179 134.
quorum of, 127, 128.
receive and dismiss, 139–152.
records of, 170, 195, 229.
registers, 154, 174.
reports, 170, 174.
and Sabbath-schools, 133, 162 164.
and sacraments, 83, 93.
special, 126.

Session:
and Temperance. See TEMPERANCE.
and Trustees, 40, 162.
of vacant churches, 80, 220, 358, 550.
visited, 231.
Sessional jurisdiction, 58, 115, 133, 201, 326, 328, 335, 355.
Sessional visitation, 161.
Sessions of G. Assembly, 305, 538.
Shorter Catechism, 14, 19, 108, 163, 295, 337, 350, 354, 378.
Slander, 136, 138, 223.
Slavery, 486–494.
Slaves:
and baptism, 86.
emancipation of, 489.
instruction of, 486–494.
traffic in, 487, 493.
Signers:
of call, 31, 374.
of petition for organization, 30.
Sine titulo ordination, 51, 207, 386.
Singing, 76-80.
Sitting in prayer, 76.
Societies:
Bible, 444.
educational, 438, 445, 460.
missionary, 460, 465–473.
tract, 445–447.
Society and church, 37.
Soundness, 26, 178, 210.
Source of power, 26–28, 44, 121.
Southern Presbyterian Church, 288–293.
South-western Advisory Committee, 425.
Speakers, 536.
Speeches limited, 535.
Sponsors, 88.
Sprinkling, 89.
Standards, 13, 17, 19, 24, 295, 354, 378.
amended, 20, 294–299.
and communicants, 26.
and Licentiates, 354.
and officers, 24, 26, 311, 379.
and ordination, 206.
revised, 20, 294–299.
Standing Committees, 418, 419, 540.
on Benevolence, 516, 519.
and Boards, 418.
on Commissions, 553.
on Elections, 553.
on church extension, 423, 473.
Standing Committees:
on Mileage, 556.
on Missions, 418.
Home, 422.
Foreign, 465.
and Permanent, 418.
on Publication, 448.
Standing:
orders, 538.
rules, 294.
rules for judicatories, 530–538.
of suspended communicants, 146, 307.
of suspended Ministers, 228.
State, authority of, 18, 23, 120, 197.
State and Church, 18, 23, 120.
State Universities, 335.
Stated Clerks, 532, 540, 543, 546.
Stated meetings, 237, 256.
Stated Supply, 48, 130, 187, 400.
plan, 359.
Statistical reports, 163, 175, 235, 259, 521.
Students for ministry, 201, 323.
Substitutes, 533.
Successors of Apostles, 43, 180.
Sunday papers, 94.
Superintendents of Board of Publication, 454.
Superintendents of Missions, 256.
Supervisory Missionaries, 256.
Supplementary Contingent Expense Fund, 562–564.
Supplementary Fund, Erection, 478.
Suspended members, 146, 307.
dismissed, 146.
restored, 59, 142, 315.
standing of, 146, 307.
vote of, 56, 307.
Suspended Ministers, 222, 227.
dismissed, 212, 215.
restored, 221, 228.
Suspended Ruling Elders and Deacons, 314.
dismissed, 146, 314.
restored, 59, 317, 323.
Suspension from office, 122, 314.
Sustentation, 499–505.
Committee on, 500.
conditions for, 502.
department of Board of Home Missions, 501.
Fund, 499–505.
objects of, 503.
in other churches, 499.
pastorates, 500.

Sustentation:
scheme, 500.
Synodical, 505.
Synagogues, 44, 53, 61, 191.
Synod, 241–259.
absentees from, 252.
appeals, etc. in, 250–254, 268.
and Boards, 255, 417.
bounds of, 242, 272.
changed, 244, 272.
cited, 273.
Clerk of, 257, 543.
commissions of, 253.
Committee on Beneficence, 520.
complaints in, 253.
consolidation of, 243.
corresponding members of, 250, 274.
a delegated body, 242, 244.
delegates to, 242, 244, 246.
disowned, 272.
dissolved, 272.
duties of, 250–256.
fail to meet, 247.
and final appeal, 251, 268.
first, 16, 241.
formed, 244, 272.
and General Assembly, 243, 248, 254, 260, 272.
and lower judicatories, 241, 251, 252.
jurisdiction of, 251.
meetings of, 247–250, 256.
members of, 241, 296.
and missions, 256, 462, 469–471.
of Missouri, 288.
Moderator of, 247–249, 529, 540.
new, 244, 272.
of New York, 285.
of Philadelphia and New York, 285.
opened and closed, 256.
and overtures, 254.
of Philadelphia, 17, 285.
powers of, 250–254.
to assess churches, 559.
over communicants, 246, 251, 252.
over Ministers, 209, 246, 251, 253.
over Presbyteries, 184, 239, 252–254.
over Ruling Elders and Deacons, 246, 251, 253.
a larger Presbytery, 241, 243.
quorum of, 242, 246.
Synod:
records of, 243, 257–259.
references in, 253.
reorganized, 242–246, 272.
reports of, 259, 520.
representation in, 241–246.
review records, 252.
time and place, 247, 248.
try by commission, 253.
Synodical Committee on Benevolence, 517.
Synodical missionaries, 219, 256.
Synodical representation, 264.
Synodical sustentation, 505.
Synodical Theological Seminaries, 434.
Syrian church government, 12.
Systematic beneficence, 515–521.
Systematic giving, 500–503, 518, 521.

Tellers, 535.
Temperance, 140, 162, 509–512.
centennial week, 572.
and church membership, 140, 509, 510.
narrative, 236.
Permanent Committee on, 511.
in public schools, 512.
Temporary Clerks, 549.
Term Deacons, 69, 318, 322.
Term Elders, 59, 317–322.
Terms of communion, 26, 91, 140.
Testimony, 137, 138.
printed, 195.
recorded, 194.
Testimony of judicatories, 125, 161, 251, 271, 294.
Thanksgiving, 76, 93, 97.
Theological College in India, 441, 472.
Theological seminaries, 339–347, 431–436.
and Board of Education, 329–346.
and Candidates, 332–336, 339, 347, 352.
colored, 341, 348, 352, 489.
foreign, 336.
Germans, 337, 341.
and Catechism, 350.
and English Bible, 346.
fellowships in, 436.
four years' course in, 352.
and General Assembly, 333, 342, 343–346, 393, 572.
independent, 435.

Theological seminaries:
instruction in, 343, 346, 352.
optional course, 352.
presbyterial, 435.
and Presbyteries, 339.
Professors of, 342, 343, 393.
reports of, 334.
synodical, 434.
Threefold ministry, 46, 204, 387.
Time of installation and ordination, 206, 375, 380, 397.
Time and place changed, 248.
Title of General Assembly, 260.
Title of property, 36–41.
Tokens, 91.
Tracts, 442, 445, 448.
Tract societies, 445–447.
Traffic in slaves, 487, 493.
Translation of Pastors, 392–401.
Treasurer of General Assembly, 546.
Trial:
of appeals, etc., 190–211.
with closed doors, 168, 240, 537.
by commission, 196, 226, 253.
of communicants, 134–139.
of courts, 252, 273.
demanded, 139, 223.
discontinued, 139.
in judicatories, 134, 190, 222–228.
of Ministers, 222–228.
originated, 134, 222.
refused, 138, 139.
of Ruling Elders and Deacons, 58, 127, 132, 135–139.
Trials:
for license, 306, 348–351.
for ordination, 378–380.
Triennial Assemblies, 299, 300.
Trustees, 38.
Board of, 38.
of Board of Publication, 448, 450.
and Deacons, 38, 39, 63.
electors of, 38.
of Erection Fund, 476.
of General Assembly, 482.
and Pastor, 37.
of Presbyterian House, 449, 450, 483.
of Presbytery, 39.
and property, 40, 41, 162.
records of, 38.
and Session, 40, 41.

Unacceptability of Ruling Elders, 58, 315–317.

Unbaptized electors, 57.
Unconverted communicants, 154–156.
Unemployed Ministers, 216–220.
Union:
of churches, 178.
with other churches, 279, 280.
of Old and New School churches, 280.
with Southern Church, 288–290.
Union Presbyteries, 184.
Union Theological Seminary of General Assembly, 435.
in New York, 340, 342, 435.
Unitarian Church, 84, 119, 206.
Ministers, 206.
United Christian Commission, 51.
United Domestic Missionary Society, 421.
United Foreign Missionary Society, 462, 467.
United Synod of Presbyterian Church, 261, 288, 494.
Unity of Church, 28, 29, 177–181.
Universal Church, 29.
Universalist Church, 206.
Unorganized congregations, 35.

Vacant churches, 187, 218, 220, 358, 550.
aided, 412.
discipline in, 115, 127, 130, 159.
obtain Pastor, 359–369.
represented, 187, 358.
responsible, 188, 412, 547.
and Ruling Elders, 56, 80, 187, 551.
services in, 80, 358, 359, 550.
Session of, 80, 220, 358, 550.
and unemployed Ministers, 218–220.
Verdict of civil court, 120, 197.
Version, new, of Bible, 445.
Vice-Moderator, 303, 531.
Vices, 125, 140, 294.
Visitations, 161, 231.
by commission, 232.
pastoral, 161.
presbyterial, 231.
sessional, 157.
Vocation to ministry, 324.
to office, 305.
Vote:
in appeal, etc., 194, 198.
division in, 535.
for Moderator, 302, 528.

Vote:
of Moderator, 303, 526, 531.
right to, 38, 166, 306.
Voters:
in appeal, 199.
for Pastor, 115, 166, 365.
on records, 230.
for Ruling Elders and Deacons, 56, 68, 115, 306.
for Trustees, 38, 115.
Voting, 535.
Vows:
at installation, 312, 382, 398.
at licensure, 354.
at ordination, 311, 379, 381.

WALDENSIAN CHURCH GOVERNMENT, 12.
Wallingford Academy, 490.
Washington College, 339.
Watts's imitation of Psalms, 78, 79.
Week of Prayer, 96.
Weekly contribution, 373, 516.
Westminster Assembly, 13.
Westminster Sabbath-school Hymnal, 164.
Westminster standards, 14, 17–19.
Western Committee on Missions, 424.
Western Education Society, 439.
Western Foreign Missionary Society, 469–471.
Western Theological Seminary, 340.
Widows' Fund, 480, 486.
Wine at Lord's Supper, 92.
Withdrawal:
from church, 151–156.
from ministry, 215, 216, 221, 382.
Withdrawal:
from Presbytery, 24, 220.
Witnesses:
cited, 137.
censured, 137.
credibility of, 138.
heathen, 138.
members of court, 137.
new, 138.
Ministers, 137.
non-communicants, 137.
from other churches, 137.
under oath, 123, 526.
Women:
Boards, 428, 472.
Candidates, 325.
Deaconesses, 66, 67.
Executive Committee of Home Missions, 428.
Home Missionary Society, 429.
licensed, 81, 325.
praying, 81.
Temperance Union, 265.
work for women, 429.
World's Week of Prayer, 96.
Worship, 29, 71–117.
and Ministers, 74, 76, 80, 82–93, 97, 108, 111, 117.
and Ruling Elders and Deacons, 80, 359, 546–548.
and Session, 80, 162–165, 547, 548.
in an unorganized church, 35.
in vacant churches, 80, 358, 359, 546–548.
Written parts of trial, 349, 380.
sermons, 82.

YEAS AND NAYS RECORDED, 535.
Young People's Societies, 164, 575.

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